

A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Church-Catechism :

In Several
DISCOURSES
On all the PARTS of it:

Together with Two Discourses.

One, On confessing Christ before Men.
The other, The great Sin of denying him.

V O L. II.

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I Cor. xiv. 12. — *Seek that ye may excel, to the edifying of the Church.*

L O N D O N,
Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.



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A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism :
CONTAINING
The DECALOGUE,
OR
TEN COMMANDMENTS,

Matth. 19. 17. *If thou wilt enter into Life,
keep the Commandments.*

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.



T H E P R E F A C E.



*G*OD Almighty that made the World, bath the sole Right to command and govern it: to which end, it was expedient for him to give Laws to his Creatures, to direct them in their Duty, and to set them their bounds, which they should not pass.

And because there is no doing our Master's Will without knowing it, 'twas likewise necessary that he should publish his Mind to the World, and give Mankind the Knowledge of his Laws.

Accordingly our great Creator bath given us a Law, engraven at first upon the Tables of the Heart, and after, upon two Tables of Stone, as a lasting Monument of his Care, and a standing Rule of our Lives and Actions: this Law is sum'd up for us in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which contain the whole of our Duty both to God and Man; and coming from him, who is Wisdom and Truth itself, must needs be (as the Apostle styles it) Holy, Just and Good.

'Twas first given by Moses to the Jews only, who were a peculiar People, to whom alone pertain'd the Adoption, the giving of the Law, and the Promises: But was since enlarg'd and given to all Christians by our Blessed Saviour, who refin'd it from all corrupt Interpretations, and explain'd it to a stricter and more spiritual Sense than was ever known before.

But tho the knowledge of the Law be highly useful and necessary, yet that alone is not sufficient to Salvation without the

the Practice and Observation of it. 'Tis the keeping of the Commandments that leads to eternal Life ; and if ye know these things, ye are only Happy if ye do them.

By this Law we have the Knowledge of Sin, not barely to entertain our Speculation, but to regulate our Practice, and to help us to steer our Course aright.

In short, This Law being given to be a Light unto our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths ; it will not be amiss to hang it out unto the People, to make their way plain before them, and to guide their Feet into the ways of Truth and Peace, which is the sole Design of the following Exposition.

I am sufficiently sensible how far it must fall short of the Dignity of the Subject ; for who can reach the Perfection of the Divine Law, or fully comprehend the Mind of so great a Lawgiver ?

However, such as it is, 'tis humbly tender'd to the Judgment and Practice of the honest Reader, who, 'tis to be hop'd, will accept the good Intention of the Author, and cover the Failings and Imperfections of the Undertaking.

It remains only, that we in good earnest set ourselves to the Practice of our Duty, as 'tis here discover'd to us ; and implore the Blessing of Heaven to assist us in it, which will never be wanting to our hearty and sincere Endeavours.

Farewel.

The Commandments.

GOD spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage.

Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven

Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth: thou shalt not bow down to them, or worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a Jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shew Mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy: six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; for in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that is therein, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt do no Murder.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

Thou shalt not Steal.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife, nor his Man-servant, nor his Maid-servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is his.





A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION of the Second Part of the Church- Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

MATTH. V. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.



HAVING in a former Treatise shew'd what we are to believe in order to Salvation, by the Explication of the Apostles Creed; I proceed to shew what we are to do as necessary to that end, by a particular Explication of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. To this the

Next Question and Answer in the Catechism lead us, in these words: *You said, that your God-fathers and God-mothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments; tell me how many there be,* To which

The Answer is, *Ten; the same which God spake in the 20th Chapter of Exodus, saying, &c.*

But before I enter upon the *Commandments*, 'twill be requisite to premise something touching the Obligation, the Excellence, and the Extent of the Divine Law. Of the
First

First of these I shall treat at this time, from these words of our Saviour, *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, &c.*

The occasion of which words, was from a certain Jealousy of the Jews and others, that Christ design'd to destroy the Old Law, which they held in great Veneration. This they gather'd from his frequent opposing what he said, to what *had been said to them of old*: because he gave other and higher Precepts than those they had receiv'd, and put a stricter sense upon the Law and Prophets than was commonly known and receiv'd among them; they concluded he was about to dissolve the whole Frame of *Moses's* Law, and to set up a new Doctrine in opposition to it.

Now to remove this Suspicion, he wills them, in the words of our Text, *Not to think that he came to destroy the Law and the Prophets*; assuring them the contrary: for he *came not to destroy, but to fulfil it*. In treating of which words, I must shew,

First, What we are to understand by the *Law and the Prophets*.

Secondly, What is here meant by *destroying*, and *fulfilling* of it.

Thirdly, In what sense our Saviour denies the one, and affirms the other, that he *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*. For the

First, By the Law and the Prophets, we are to understand the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, or the whole Revelation of the Divine Will deliver'd by them, and contain'd in the Books of the Old Testament: which Law consisted of three great Parts or Branches, *viz.* the Moral, the Judicial, and the Ceremonial Precepts.

The Moral Law contains the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, which are the Dictates of Natural Light, or the Rules of a Holy Life; these were first engraven on the Tables of the Heart by the Finger of God himself. And when they began to be blotted and defac'd by the defection of Mankind, there was a Second Edition of them on Mount *Sinai*, engraven on two Tables of Stone, and deliver'd to the People of the Jews by the Hand of *Moses*. After which, being corrupted by the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, our Saviour gave a Third Edition of them on the Mount of *Olives*; in which he rescu'd them from their corrupt



rupt Interpretations, and refin'd them into a more pure Rule of Life and Manners. The Publication hereof on Mount *Sinai*, was attended with Thunder and Lightning, and with all the stern and pompous Solemnities of Dread and Terror, to awe the World into the observance of them, as you may read at large in the 19th Chapter of *Exodus*. This last Edition of them on the Mount of *Olives*, was deliver'd in the more pleasing Sound of Peace and Blessedness, to draw Disciples by the Cords of Love, and by the most obliging Attractives, to encourage and reward their Obedience, as you may see in *Mat. 5*.

The Judicial Law consisted of those Laws and Statutes that were given to the *Jews* as they were a Commonwealth, and were prescrib'd to them by God Almighty for their Civil Government.

The Ceremonial Law consisted of Sacrifices, Offerings, and divers kinds of Washing; all which, were typical Representations of the Life and Death of the *Messias*, or memorative Signs and Shadows of good things to be receiv'd by him.

In short then, the whole Oeconomy of the *Jewish* Religion contain'd in the Old Testament, and particularly the Rules of a Holy Life deliver'd to the World before the coming of our Saviour, is what we understand here by the Law and Prophets. But,

Secondly, What is it to destroy the Law and the Prophets, and what to fulfil it? To destroy a Law, is to take off the Obligation of it, and to loose those from any farther Duty and Observance of it, that were before bound by it: And this is done, either,

1. By enacting something in opposition to it, whereby it is formally repeal'd, and so declar'd null, and void of any farther Obligation. Or else,

2. By removing all Occasions of any farther use of it, whereby the Obligation ceases of course, as the Laws of War cease and have no place in times of Peace.

To fulfil a Law, is not only to observe and perform what is requir'd by it, but to advance and improve it, to fill up the Vacuities of it, and to answer and accomplish all that is intended by it.

These things being premis'd, I proceed to enquire,

Thirdly, In what sense our Saviour declares here, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil it.

In answer whereunto, we must note, that tho Christ did not properly destroy the Ceremonial or Judicial Laws of *Moses*, by opposing, violating or contradicting either; yet these words of our Saviour are principally meant of the Moral Law, or those Precepts of Natural Light sum'd up and deliver'd in the Ten Commandments: which he was so far from diminishing or disannulling, that he rather confirm'd and heighten'd the Obligation, as plainly appears by his expounding of it in this Chapter.

As for the Ceremonial Law, that may be said rather to die of itself, than to be destroy'd; for as Darknes vanishes at the approach of Light, so the dark Types of the Law, which were only Figures and Shadows of good things, yielded to the Substance, and disappear'd of course by the brightness of his coming.

As for the Judicial Law of the *Jewish* State, that was not destroy'd by our Saviour, but fell of itself by the destruction of the Commonwealth: for those Laws being peculiar only to the *Jewish* Nation, were to continue no longer than the Commonwealth continu'd; insomuch, that when the City of *Jerusalem* was destroy'd, and the *Jewish* Polity dissolv'd by becoming a *Roman* Province, there was an end of the Commonwealth, and consequently of the Laws by which it was govern'd: which, without any Violence or Violation offer'd to them by our Saviour, fell of their own accord, with the Dissolution of the Government. So that he cannot be said truly to destroy either of those Laws by any express Repeal or Opposition to them, tho they both ceas'd and fell to the ground.

But this Saying of our Saviour, that *he came not to destroy the Law*, was chiefly intended of the Moral Law, or Ten Commandments; for he never abrogated or dispens'd with any one Precept of that Law, but left his Followers under the perpetual Obligation and Observance of them; he renew'd and ratify'd the Precepts of both Tables, requiring us to love God with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and our Neighbour as ourselves; adding, that on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Again, in this Sermon of his on the Mount, he adopts into his Religion that Dictate of Natural Light, *All things whatsoever*

ye

ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. By all which, as likewise by the whole Course of his Life and Doctrine, it manifestly appears, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, by annulling, opposing, or any ways lessening our Obligation to them.

Yea, he was so far from destroying the Law or the Prophets, that he affirms the Design of his coming was to fulfil both; which will lead us to enquire into the true sense and meaning of those Words. And here we may observe again, that tho Christ punctually observ'd the whole Law, which is in Scripture express'd by his *fulfilling all Righteousness*; yet the Expression here chiefly relates to the Moral part of it, which he not only observ'd and establish'd, but likewise improv'd and perfected: the word in the Original is *πληρῶσαι*, which signifies not only to perform, but to perfect and fill up; and so our Saviour's fulfilling the Law was his advancing, accomplishing and perfecting of it, which he did in some sense in all its Branches.

He fulfil'd the Ceremonial Law, not only by his own Obedience to it, but by accomplishing of it, and introducing the Substance of what was only prefigur'd and shadow'd by it. The Sacrifices injoin'd in that Law were but Types of the great Propitiatory Sacrifice of Christ himself; and all the legal Washings and Purifications represented only that spiritual Purity that he requir'd under the Gospel. These were *shadows of good things to come, but the Body is Christ*, says the Apostle, *Col. 2. 17.* He was the Substance of those Shadows, and introduc'd the things themselves that were represented by them: which is the sense of those words of St. *John, The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*; *John 1. 17.* meaning, that Christ brought in the Life and Substance of what was only pictur'd and prefigur'd in the Law of *Moses*. Again,

He fulfil'd the Judicial Law, not only by submitting himself to it, but by adding that Royal Law of Love and universal Kindness, which tends more to preserve the Peace and Prosperity of a Commonwealth, than any Book of Statutes, or the whole Body of Human Laws.

But above all, he fulfil'd the Moral Law, not only by his own Personal Obedience, but by adding to it some stricter Rules of Holiness, and filling up those Vacuities that *Moses* had left in Moral Duties. He establish'd the Covenant upon better Promises, and gave sublimer Precepts than

those given of old; he repair'd and made up what was wanting in *Moses's* Law, and restor'd what was taken from it by false Glosses and Interpretations. He enlarg'd the Sense of it farther than the *Jews* ever receiv'd it, and extended the Obligation of it, not only to the outward but to the inward Man, forbidding the Murder of the Heart, as well as of the Hand; the Adultery and Impurity of the Mind, as well as of the Body; Coveting as well as Purloining: Instead of *returning Evil for Evil*, allow'd by the Law of Retaliation, he requir'd to *overcome Evil with Good*: and whereas it had been said by them of old, *Thou shalt love thy Friends, and hate thine Enemy*; he hath commanded us to *love our Enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us*.

In short, he fulfill'd the whole Law, by accomplishing what was contain'd in it, and answering all that was intended by it. The Design of the Ceremonial Law, was not any delight which God took in the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, but in a broken and contrite Heart; which he fulfill'd by requiring *Obedience*, which is *better than Sacrifice, and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams*; as we read, *Jer. 6. 20. Isa. 1. 11, 12. Mic. 6. 6, 7.*

The End of the Judicial Law was to do Judgment and Justice, and to preserve the Peace and Welfare of the Commonwealth, which he effectually provided for by many strict Precepts of Justice and Charity: So that Christ, both in his Person and Doctrine, was the *End of the Law for Righteousness*, which was the thing mainly intended in the whole *Mosaical* Dispensation. By all which, we see how truly our Saviour affirm'd, that he *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*: for his addition of higher and better Precepts, was no Destruction but Improvement: as a Child is not destroy'd, but improv'd and perfected, by arriving to the Stature of a Man.

But are we still then under the Law? Do we not read often of a *Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; and that *we are not under the Law, but under Grace*? and how can this be, if the Obligation of it remains? In answer hereunto,

I. The Liberty mention'd by the Apostle, is a Freedom from the Yoke of Legal Rites and Ceremonies, which before the coming of the *Messias*, lay hard on the Neck of the *Jews*; but now, neither they nor we are under the Obligation of them: and to continue them now, would be

to intangle ourselves in a Toke of Bondage. For that Law of Ceremonies was only a Schoolmaster to lead unto Christ, who being come, hath caus'd that Law to cease, not by any opposition to it, but by fulfilling of it, and removing any farther use and occasion for it. For since they all refer'd to, and were accomplish'd in him, there can be no reason for the longer continuance of them, he being the substance and completion of them. Again,

2. For the Moral Law, we are freed from that too as to the Rigor and Curse of it: the Law in its Rigor exacts perfect Obedience, and pronounces Sentence upon every Breach and Violation of it; as it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* By this we are all guilty and condemn'd Persons, lying under the heavy Sentence of Eternal Death; but Christ *hath redeem'd us* (says the Apostle) *from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us,* Gal. 4.

By his New Covenant of Grace he hath abated of this Rigor, he accepts our hearty Endeavours, and takes Sincerity for complete Obedience: so that now we are not to stand or fall by the rigorous Terms and Demands of the Law, but may appeal from that to the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel, there being now *no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; in which sense it is, that we are said to be, *not under the Law, but under Grace.* But yet,

3. We are not freed from the Law as a Rule of Life and Manners, in which sense it remains in its full Vigor and Authority; for as *God hath not left himself without a Witness* of his Being, so neither hath he left us without a Rule of our Actions. Our Saviour hath not loosen'd our Obligation to the Divine Law, but rather encreas'd and heighten'd it; nor hath he dispens'd with any Moral Duty to God or Man, but instead thereof hath perfected and added to them; he hath more fully explain'd, enlarg'd and inculcated our Duty than 'twas before: and tho he hath deliver'd his Followers from the Curse, yet he hath not freed them from the Observance of Divine Precepts. These are still to regulate our Practice, to bind our Conscience, and to be both the Measure and Motive of our Obedience; these are to be standing Directions what we are to do, and what to avoid, and will for ever continue to be so: for tho *Heaven and Earth may pass away, yet not one jot or tittle of God's Law shall pass away or fall to the ground.*

Thus we see the indispenfible Obligation that lies upon us to obferve the Decalogue or Ten Commandments ; and likewise how far our Bleffed Saviour was from destroying or difannulling it. From whence we may learn,

First, The dangerous Error of the Libertines and Antinomians, who fondly imagine that Chrift's fulfilling the whole Law in our ftead, hath freed his Followers from any farther Duty and Obfervance of it ; that nothing now is requir'd of us but only to believe, to accept of and apply to ourfelves what he hath done for us ; that we are to be fav'd by the imputed Righteoufnefs of Chrift, without regard to any Holinefs of our own ; that all preaching up of good Works is moral preaching, and they that live in the practice of them are only moral Men ; that we are to have no eye to the Strictnefs and Severity of the Law, but to caft ourfelves wholly upon the Mercy and Favour of the Gospel.

Thefe, and the like Doctrines, too publickly vented, and too greedily receiv'd among us, let Men loofe from all the Obligations of Religion and Virtue, and open a Gap for all Licentiousnefs. We fee the End of the Law was Righteoufnefs, to induce Men *to do juftly, to love Mercy, and walk humbly with God* : And what was more obfcurely and typically reveal'd of this kind in the Old Testament, is more clearly explain'd and brought to light by the Gospel ; and therefore all fuch Doctrines being contrary to the Laws of God, are to be reject'd as the corrupt Defigns and Inventions of Men. Wherefore in the

Last place : Since Chrift came not to deftroy, but to fulfil and perfect what was deliver'd in the Law and Prophets ; let us not look upon it as annul'd or antiquated, but that he hath ty'd the Obligation fo much ftronger and fafter upon us : He hath only taken off the Load of the *Mofaical* Rites and Ceremonies, and thereby made his Yoke the more eafy, and his Burden lighter, which we are not therefore to caft off, but to take up and bear it with the greater chearfulnefs ; he hath remov'd the Cloud and Obfcurity that was upon many Precepts of the Law, and made our Way more plain before us. In a word therefore, let it be a Light to our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths ; the Guide of our Lives, and the Rule of our Actions : and as many as walk by this Rule, Peace be upon them and the *Israel of God*.

DISCOURSE II.

PSAL. CXIX. 96.

I have seen an end of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.

I Premis'd something in my last touching the Obligation of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, which I am to explain to you: I must now add something touching the Excellency and Extent of the Divine Law, the better to excite you to the study and practice of it.

For the Excellency of it; We find the Royal Psalmist, who, by his frequent Study and Meditation upon it, was well vers'd in it, at last setting forth the Perfection of this Divine Law, in *Psal. 19. 7, 8, 9. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, giving wisdom to the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes; the Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.* Where he amply declares the Excellency of God's Law, from the Holiness, the Justice, the Usefulness, the Certainty, the Purity, and Perfection of it.

For the Extent and Comprehensiveness of it, he tells us here in the words of our Text, that tho *he had seen an end of all Perfection, yet the Commandments of God were exceeding broad, and he could see no end thereof.*

By the Law of God here we understand not, 1. The Ceremonial part of it; which tho not properly destroy'd by Christ, yet by his fulfilling of it ceas'd of course, and we have liv'd to see an end of that. Nor yet,

2. Are we to understand here the Judicial Law, which being the Statutes and Ordinances of the Jewish Commonwealth, were peculiar only to that Nation, and ceas'd likewise with the Dissolution of that Government; so that with respect to them, and many other sublunary Excellencies, we may say with *David*, we have seen an end of all Perfection. But the Law, whose Excellency and Extent are here celebrated, is the Moral Law or Ten Commandments;

which, the Psalmist here tells us, *are exceeding broad*. This Law is indeed exceeding strait, as to the Holiness and Strictness of its Precepts, giving not the least scope or indulgence to any unruly Lust; but 'tis exceeding broad with respect to the Comprehensiveness of its Injunctions, which reach not only to the outward, but the inner Man. Tho' God Almighty hath compriz'd his whole Will in Ten short Laws, call'd therefore the Decalogue or Ten Commandments; and tho' our blessed Saviour hath reduc'd them all to one Precept, making *Love the fulfilling of the Law*, declaring that upon the two parts of it, the Love of God and of our Neighbour, as upon two Hinges, *hang all the Law and the Prophets*: Tho, I say, it seems to lie in this narrow compass, yet each of these Parts dilate and spread themselves into so many branches, as make them exceeding broad and extensive. For the Love of God comprizes all that Duty and Homage we owe to our Maker, and will not suffer the least Violation of his Honour: The Love of our Neighbour includes all the Offices of Justice and Kindness we owe to one another, and will not permit any Violence to be offer'd to the Person or Rights of any: and both these are justly styl'd the fulfilling of the Law. Yea, Charity, which includes both, is of a large extent, as may be seen in the several Acts and Branches of it, mention'd by St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 13. call'd therefore *the Bond of Perfection*. And tho' the *End of the Law is Charity*, yet is that Grace so exceeding wide and comprehensive, that we can see no end of that Perfection.

Now the Breadth and Length of the Commandments will the better appear, by considering the Persons, the Time, and the Matters to which they extend; in all which senses we shall find them *exceeding broad*. And,

1. For the Persons concern'd in them, they are all Mankind, for whose Welfare and Direction they were first given, and are still continu'd and deriv'd down to us; and being the Dictates of natural Reason, as well as the Directions of the Divine Will, their Obligation must be as wide as Human Nature, and extend unto all Persons. 'Tis true indeed there were some Circumstances at the first solemn Delivery of this Law, that seem'd to relate only to the Jewish Nation; and being expressly styl'd a Covenant made with that People, seems to confine it wholly unto them: but yet if we consider the Nature of the Commandments themselves, and our Saviour's Exposition of them, we shall find

This find them of a larger extent, and to concern all Mankind. Then,

2. For the Time ; the Obligation of these Precepts commenc'd with the beginning of the World, and will last to the end of it : for being first engraven on the Heart, and afterwards on Tables of Stone by the Finger of God himself, nothing can totally deface or destroy the Impression. *Thy Word* (saith the Psalmist) *is from Everlasting, and thy Truth endureth throughout all Ages.* Yea, the Love of God and our Neighbour, which is the Substance of this Law, will continue to Eternity, and last when Time itself shall be no more ; for 'twill go with us into the other World, and there make up the greatest part of our future Felicity : which indefeasible Duration shews us the Length and Breadth of God's Commandments.

3. The Matter or Things to which they extend, will farther shew them to be *exceeding broad* ; for they comprehend all the Duties, and reach to all the Actions of human Life.

(1.) All those Precepts scatter'd up and down in the Holy Scripture may be reduc'd to, and are sum'd up in these Commandments : insomuch, that there is no Duty we owe either to God or Man, but falls under one or more of these ten Precepts, which are therefore reckon'd a Summary or Abstract of the whole Duty of Man ; and that because,

(2.) They extend likewise to all the Actions of human Life, so that there is not an idle Word or an evil Work, but comes under the Check and Censure of this Law ; yea, it reaches the very Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, and designs to regulate the inward as well as the outward Man. This is a thing peculiar to the Divine Laws, to take cognizance of our Thoughts, which no human Power can discern or reach : whereas to God the Maker and Searcher of Hearts, our Minds are as visible as our Faces : and 'tis but reason that his Laws should reach as far as his Knowledge, and that he should punish those Irregularities, which none else can prescribe to or prevent. *We know* (saith the Apostle) *that the Law is spiritual* ; for it enters into our Spirits, summons our Thoughts, and arraigns the Motions and Affections of the Heart : for which reason, the *Word of God is said to be quick and powerful, piercing into the Soul and Spirit, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart* ; Heb. 4. 12.

Thus

Thus we see the Commandments of God in their full latitude are *exceeding broad*, and include much more in the Sense, than is express'd in the Letter of them; as will more fully appear hereafter in the expounding of them.

But for the better taking the Dimensions of the Divine Law, and to shew the Length and Breadth of God's Commandments, 'twill be requisite to premise some of those general Rules given for the expounding of them.

Because the several Precepts of this Law are express'd, some in a negative, and some in an affirmative Form, therefore the

First Rule usually given for expounding of them is this, *viz.* The Negative Precepts of the Law include the Affirmative, and the Affirmative always infer the Negative: that is, where any Sin is forbidden in God's Commandments, there the Duty contrary to it is requir'd; and where any Duty is requir'd, there the contrary Sin is forbidden, for these things necessarily imply and infer each other. Thus for example, those negative Precepts that forbid Murder, Adultery, Theft, false Witness, Covetousness, require the opposite Virtues of Meekness, Chastity, Honesty, Truth, and Contentment with our Condition. And those affirmative Precepts that require the keeping holy the Lord's Day, and honouring God's Holy Name and Word, forbid all Abuse and Profanation of either. But tho the negative and affirmative Precepts thus include and infer one another, yet the Obligation of them are not both alike; and therefore a

Second Rule is wont to be added, *viz.* That the negative Precepts bind *semper & ad semper*, that is, always and every moment of time: but the affirmative Precepts bind *semper*, but not *ad semper*; that is, they bind always, but not every moment. As in the former Instances, those negative Precepts that forbid Murder, Adultery, Theft, and false Witness, bind always and to every moment; because there can be no part or moment of Time, in which it may be lawful to murder, commit Adultery, steal, or bear false Witness. But the affirmative Precepts of keeping holy the Sabbath-day, and serving and worshipping of God, bind indeed always, but not to every moment; for there are many moments of Time between the return of those seasons, in which we may be otherwise lawfully employ'd, tho these things be for some time intermitted: and both the Necessities of Nature and the Duties of our Calling require some Cessation

Cessation from them. Indeed as to the Habit of Obedience, that extends to every moment, for we are bid to pray without ceasing; that is, to be always in a readiness and disposition to serve him: but the actual Performance of it is not always necessary or practicable, for we cannot be every minute upon our knees, or always actually praying or praising God.

A Third Rule for the right expounding and understanding this Law, is, That those negative Commands that forbid the outward and grosser Acts of any Sin, forbid all the inward Desires and Motions of the Soul towards it; and likewise those affirmative Precepts that command the external Acts of any Virtue, command also those internal Acts and Affections of the Soul, that are futable and necessary to the performance of it. Thus, for example, the Law that prohibits Adultery, forbids not only the outward grosser Acts of Uncleanliness, but all Impurity of the Mind, all unchaste Desires, or Delight in forbidden Pleasures, tho they never come into Act. So likewise the Commandment that enjoins the worshipping and serving God, exacts from us not barely the outward Service of the Lip or the Knee, but chiefly the inward Reverence and Devotion of the Heart.

4. Another Rule is, that those Precepts that prohibit the greater or higher Acts of Sin, forbid likewise all the lower Degrees, Occasions and Tendencies thereunto; and those Commandments that enjoin any Duty, require also all the Means and Helps that are necessary to the doing of it. Thus the Commandment that forbids Murder, prohibits all rash and causeless Anger, with all that Hatred and Malice that may occasion it: The Commandment that forbids Adultery, condemns all wanton Desires and Dresses, all lascivious Behaviour in Thought, Word or Deed, that may lead to it. In like manner all those Precepts that require us to love and worship God, to honour and obey our Parents, require likewise all the necessary Means, Helps, and Occasions leading thereunto. All these things are warranted by our Saviour's expounding the Law in his Divine Sermon on the Mount.

Lastly, Tho the Precepts of the first Table relate to the Duty we owe to God, and tho the Duties of the second Table which concern our Neighbour, are to be observ'd for the sake of the first; yet in some cases the Duties of the first Table give place to those of the second, and the Love

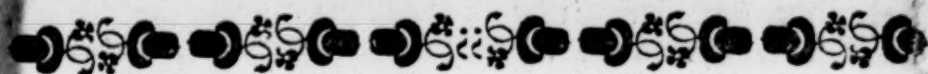
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we bear to our Neighbour will supersede the Obligation of some Duties we are to pay unto God. This Rule is grounded on the Words of God Almighty, who hath declar'd that *he will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*; not that he rejects those *Sacrifices* which he expressly requires, especially that of a *broken and contrite Heart*; but where our own or others Infirmities disable us from, or interfere with the Worship of God, there he hath graciously dispens'd with us during that Exigence, and allow'd the Service of himself to give way to the serving ourselves and our distress'd Neighbour. This is evident in the case of the Sabbath or Lord's Day, in which the Works of Necessity and Charity are by our Saviour's Approbation and Example to take place of the highest Acts of Piety: for *the Sabbath* (saith he) *was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath*; Mark 2. 27. Where the Son of God, who is Lord of the Sabbath, declares that Works of Necessity and Mercy, and that not only to Man, but to brute Beasts, may be lawfully done on that day, without any Guilt, or the Profanation of it.

Thus we see the Truth of what the Psalmist here affirms, that the Commandments of God are exceeding broad, extending to all Persons, Times, and Places, and comprehending the whole Duty of Man.

But tho the full Sense and Meaning of the Divine Law be so large and comprehensive, yet is there a close and intimate Connection between all the Parts and Precepts of it, and a necessary Dependence of one upon the other; being all so link'd and knit together by the Bond of Divine Authority, that whosoever breaketh any one of them is guilty of all: for so St. James expressly declares, that *he that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all*; James 2. 10.

Upon the whole then, the Latitude and Comprehensiveness of God's Law should put us all upon the serious Study and Meditation of it. This, we find, was the daily practice of our Royal Psalmist, who made this the frequent Subject of his Meditation; yea, we find him labouring hard to express the Love and Delight he took in it: *O how I love thy Law!* (saith he) *'tis my Meditation all the day*; and elsewhere, *All the day long is my study in it*. And because the Precepts of it were of so large an extent, we find him often praying unto God to *teach him his Statutes, and to open his eyes to see and learn the wondrous things of his Law*: And 'tis our Duty and Wisdom too, to do likewise.



DISCOURSE III.

EXOD. XX. I, 2.

And God spake all these Words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage.

HAVING in some measure clear'd our way, by shewing the Obligation, the Excellence, and the Extent of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments : I proceed now to

The Preface with which God Almighty himself was pleas'd to usher them in ; and this is contain'd in the words read, in which *Moses* having declar'd God to be the Author and Publisher of the Commandments, he brings him in saying, *I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, &c.* Which words tho' spoken immediately to the Jews, and upon the occasion of a particular Deliverance wrought for them ; yet both the Nature of the Commandments, and the Reasons by which they are urg'd, shew them equally to concern and oblige all Mankind, as we shall see after.

In the words then we have two strong Arguments to enforce the Observance of the Ten Commandments.

The first is taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of the Lawgiver, in these words, *I am the Lord thy God.*

The second from his Mercy and Goodness, in those words, *That brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, &c.*

The one is design'd to awe, the other to allure us into Obedience ; both which must be therefore spoken to. And,

First, I am to begin with the Argument taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of the Law-giver, in those words, *I am the Lord thy God* : This is design'd to work upon our Fear, and to awe Men into Obedience to God's Laws. Greatness, we know, is apt to strike Dread and Terror

Terror into Offenders, it begets a Reverence to the Persons, and adds Weight to the Words deliver'd by them; and therefore Princes are wont to affix their Name and Authority to their Laws, and to publish their Titles with their Proclamations, to excite Attention, and enforce Obedience to them. For this reason God Almighty, who is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, to gain the greater Attention and Veneration to his Laws, displays his Greatness, proclaims his Glory, And prefaces his Commands, with this august and awful Saying, *I am the Lord*.

The first Delivery of this Law on Mount *Sinai* was attended with many pompous Accents of Dread and Terror, with Thunder and Lightning, with the Sound of a Trumpet to alarm the Hearers, and make them afraid to transgress. After which, we find the Prophets often bringing in God Almighty urging and inculcating his Precepts with this Saying, *I am the Lord*: And when the People seem'd too backward to believe or consider it, he threatens so to deal with them, as to make them know that *I am the Lord*. Indeed, the best of us are but too apt to forget both God and ourselves, to be unmindful of the Greatness of the one and the Vileness of the other; and this occasions too great a neglect and carelessness of our Duty to both: and therefore we have need of something to awaken and awe us to the observance of God's Laws, and to stir up our Minds by way of Remembrance, that we do not fall into a forgetfulness and contempt of them. This was the design of God's prefixing these Words as a Prologue to his Precepts, to strike our Minds with a due Sense and Reverence of his Authority, and to awe us into Obedience to them.

Now this Sovereignty or Authority of God is founded upon the Right of Creation; for he having made all things, hath the best right to rule and govern them, and being the Author, is justly to be reckon'd the Lord of all: *It is he that hath made us* (saith the Psalmist) *and not we ourselves*; and therefore it is he that must rule us, and not we ourselves. *Hath not the Potter power over the Clay* (saith the Apostle) *which he hath made and form'd?* and shall not God have Dominion over the Works of his own Hands: Indeed, none else can, for none but he that made the World is fit and able to govern it; and the great Creator must be the sole Commander and Disposer of all things. And as none may question his Right, so neither

can

can any controul or resist his Power; he spake all things into Being with a Word, and can speak them all back again into nothing when he pleases: he holds this round World as a Ball in the Hollow of his Hand, and can toss and turn it as he will. *All the Nations unto him are but as the Drop of the Bucket, or the small Dust of the Ballance; yea they are all nothing, less than nothing, and Vanity: Isai. 40. 15, 17.* His Voice shakes the Heavens, and his Word makes the Earth and the World to tremble.

This is he that delivers his Commandments to us, the sole Lord and Sovereign Maker of all things, who hath a just Right to, and here challenges our Obedience. And that we might not forget or withhold it, this great Law-giver himself, at the giving of his Law, hath thought fit to put us in mind of it, by ushering in his Precepts with these words, *I am the Lord.*

But this is not all: To this Declaration of his Sovereignty and supreme Authority, he is pleas'd to add another Term of Relation and Propriety, by styling himself the Lord our God; *I am the Lord thy God.* The words were first and principally spoken to the Jews, who were God's peculiar People, dignify'd and distinguish'd from all other Nations by many invaluable Favours and Privileges: for to them appertain'd the Adoption, the Glory and the Covenants, the giving the Law and the Promises; Rom. 9. 4, 5. God enter'd into a particular Covenant with them, and vouchsaf'd in a peculiar manner to be styl'd *their God*: He admitted them to all the Privileges of the Temple, from which all others were excluded by a Partition-Wall; but now that Inclosure is broken down, and God hath enlarg'd his Church by the Call and coming in of the *Gentiles*: so that now we are all by Baptism admitted into Covenant with him, who is thereby become to us a God, and we to him a People; insomuch, that we are as much bound to keep his Commandments as the *Israelites* were, and so are to look upon God as bespeaking us now, as he did them of old, *I am the Lord thy God.*

Thus I have consider'd the first Argument here urg'd in the Preface, taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of God, together with his peculiar Right in us, and our Dependence on him, contain'd in those words, *I am the Lord thy God.* From whence I proceed to the

Second,

Second, Which is taken from his Mercy and Goodness, in those words ; *Who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage* : where, as the foregoing Argument was intended to work upon our Fear, and to awe us into Obedience ; so this is design'd to work upon our Love, and to allure us to the observance of his Laws.

But the Mercy here mention'd, of Deliverance from the *Land of Egypt*, was peculiar to the Jews only, who partook of it ; and how can that be any Argument to us, who never were in that House of Bondage, and so could not be said to be deliver'd from it ? To this, two or three things will be necessary to be spoken.

1. Before this solemn Delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai*, God was known and celebrated by other Titles and Tokens of his Love. From the Creation of the World to the days of *Abraham*, he was styl'd the Creator of Heaven and Earth ; and all the Motives to Obedience were fetch'd from his Power in making, and his Care in providing for the Sons of Men. From the days of *Abraham* to *Moses*, he was call'd the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, from the Covenant he made with them ; and the encouragement to Obedience then was, *I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this good Land to inherit it*, Gen. 15. 7. In the time of *Moses*, when this great deliverance from *Egypt* was wrought, the Style was chang'd ; and the Law being then given, the Argument to enforce it was, *I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*, &c.

2. This Argument was very strong to the Jews to whom this Law was first given ; for the Misery and Bondage they underwent in *Egypt* was very sore and unsupportable ; they groan'd under heavy Burdens and cruel Task-masters, they were requir'd to work without Materials, and to make Brick without Straw : instead of being rewarded, they were only whip'd and beaten for their Work ; their Complaints added to their Servitude, and all their Endeavours to ease and help themselves did but increase their Burdens. From this miserable Bondage they were deliver'd by a high Hand and an out-stretch'd Arm ; God himself appearing, in their Cause, and rescuing them from the Tyranny of *Pharaoh* and the Oppression of his cruel Taskmasters : for when that insolent and haughty Prince refus'd to obey his Maker's Call and Command to let his People go, he was follow'd with those
repeated

repeated Plagues and Judgments, that made him glad to be rid of them, and caus'd him not only to consent and assist in their Deliverance, but to petition for his own.

Now this great Mercy being done for them not above six Weeks before the giving of the Law, must needs be fresh in their Memories, and could not but be a powerful Motive and Incentive to Obedience; for who that had been so lately deliver'd from so great a Thralldom, would not think himself oblig'd to hearken to so mighty a Deliverer?

For this reason it was that God Almighty, in his first Delivery of the Law to that People, beside the general Motives to Obedience from his being the Lord our God, which are common to all Mankind, made mention of this late memorable Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*, which was peculiar to them, and could not in reason but mightily prevail with them.

3. Tho God Almighty took the Opportunity of that mighty Deliverance to enforce his Law upon them; yet we find him afterward by the Prophets pressing the same Precepts from other new and occasional Instances of his Mercy and Goodness wrought for them: Hence we find the Prophet *Jeremy*, from God's reducing his People from Captivity, foretelling, *That the Days will come, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth which brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the House of Israel out of the North Country, and other Countrys where they had been carry'd captive: Jer. 23.*

7. So that 'tis not so much any one Instance of God's Goodness, tho one memorable one be here mention'd, as the general course of the Divine Mercy and Bounty, that is here made the Motive of Obedience.

4. The Deliverance of the *Israelites* from the Bondage of *Egypt*, was but a faint Type and Resemblance of our far greater Deliverance from a worse Thralldom to Ghostly Enemies; and therefore the Argument here us'd must hold much stronger upon us, than ever it did upon the *Jews*: for their Deliverance was only corporal, from the Hardships they endur'd under *Pharaoh* and his Taskmasters; whereas ours is spiritual, from a more vile Bondage we were in to Sin and Satan: theirs was but temporal, from short and momentary Evils; ours is eternal, from everlasting Misery and Destruction. And if to be rescu'd from the Land of *Egypt*, and the Cruelty of *Pharaoh*, hath been thought so powerful an inducement to the keeping of God's

Commandments ; how much greater is it to be for ever freed from the Rage and Malice of the Devil, and from all the Powers of Death and Hell ?

Now as the first Argument, taken from the Sovereignty and Authority of God, was founded on his Right of Creation ; so was this second, taken from his Mercy and Goodness, grounded on his Right of Redemption : for the Son of God bought us out of the hands of our Enemies with the Price of his own Blood, he laid down his own Life as a Ransom for ours. And whereas the Jews of old were deliver'd by the Blood of the *Paschal Lamb*, we were redeem'd only by the Blood of that immaculate *Lamb of God, that was slain to take away the Sins of the World*. And certainly this must be a much higher Incentive to the keeping of God's Laws, than any or all the temporal Deliverances of the Jews. Accordingly we find this Mercy of Redemption frequently urg'd in the New Testament as a Motive to Obedience : *We are bought with a Price* (saith the Apostle) *therefore let us glorify God both in our Souls and Bodies, which are his*. And elsewhere, *Being deliver'd out of the hands of our Enemies, we should serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness all the days of our Life*.

Thus we see the strength of those two Arguments us'd here by God Almighty to usher in his Commandments : the one taken from his Authority to enforce the Observance of them, *I am the Lord thy God* ; the other from his Mercy to oblige unto Obedience, *that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*, and us from a worse than *Egyptian Bondage*.

To draw to a Conclusion : This Discourse may help to rectify two Mistakes that have been too easily hearken'd to and receiv'd by many Christians. The

One is, That to obey God from a Motive of Fear, is servile.

The other is, That to serve him from the Hopes of Mercy or a Reward, is mercenary : Both which, they think unacceptable and displeasing unto God.

Now these are no better than Suggestions of Satan, or the vain Surmises of a misgiving Heart ; for we find God Almighty here mentioning those Attributes that are most apt to excite both our Fear and our Hope, and urges our Obedience from Considerations drawn from both : and therefore neither of them can be displeasing to him. For,

1. He puts us in mind of his absolute Sovereignty and Greatness, and likewise of his infinite Power, Authority and

and Wisdom ; all which are imply'd in those words, *I am the Lord thy God.* By this he seeks to work upon our Fear, to awe us to our Duty, and to make us afraid to offend him ; yea, we find God Almighty frequently calling for our Fear : *If I be a Master, where is my Fear ? saith the Lord of Hosts,* Mal. 1. 6. 'Tis made the Character of a wicked Person, that *he hath no fear of God before his Eyes* ; and therefore we are bid to *stand in awe, and sin not*, the one being a great help to the other : and elsewhere, we are call'd upon to *fear God and keep his Commandments.* And sure, what God himself requires and prescribes to us can be no bad Principle of Obedience. Moreover,

2. He here stirs up the *Israelites* to their Duty, from the consideration of his great Mercy in delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*. And in sundry other Places we find him encouraging his People to Obedience, from the Hopes and Promises of a Reward ; and therefore to serve him upon that account, can be no more mercenary, than it is to love him because he is merciful.

3. From both these we learn the exceeding great Love and Kindness of our Maker, in using all ways to persuade us to our own good, tho' our Righteousness extendeth not to him : for neither if we obey is he the better, nor if we refuse is he the worse ; all the Benefit of the one, and the Danger of the other, is intirely ours : yet he is pleas'd to court us to our Advantage, to accept of Mercy, and to avert our own Misery. Because Hope and Fear are the two ruling Passions of human Nature, he seeks by Rewards and Punishments to work on both, and by the most powerful Motives to invite or affright us to our Duty, letting us know our Subjection to his Power, and our Obligations to his Bounty ; that he may command us as our Lord, who hath engag'd us as our Deliverer : All which should teach us to hearken to his Voice, and to keep his Commandments, which are so holy, just and good, as even to allure or constrain our Obedience.





DISCOURSE IV.

EXOD. XX. 3.

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

HAVING seen the Preface with which God Almighty ushers in the Commandments, together with the Arguments therein us'd to enforce the Observation of them : I proceed now to the Precepts themselves which our Catechism here tells us are Ten. The

First whereof is contain'd in these Words, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before or beside me.* In this, as in all the following Commandments, we are according to the forecited Rules, to observe something requir'd, and something forbidden. The things requir'd in this first Commandment are chiefly these three :

First, That we all have a God.

Secondly, That we have the true God for our God. And

Thirdly, That we have no other beside him.

First, I say, we are all requir'd here to have a God ; for when we are commanded to have no other Gods but him, it is manifestly imply'd that we are to have a God. By a God here we understand a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Holiness, who made all things, and upon whom they all depend.

By having a God, we understand not only the Believing or Assenting in our Minds that there is such a Being, but likewise the demeaning ourselves towards him accordingly, and acting sutable to such a Belief ; that is, in conformity to his Nature and Will : for they who do otherwise cannot be said to have a God, but to reject him, and say with them in the Gospel, *We will not have this Man to reign over us.* To have any for our King, is to yield Obedience to him ; and to have a God, is to live in all humble Duty and Subjection to him : and therefore our Catechism describes the having of a God, not barely by believing the Truth of his Being, but by loving, fearing, worshipping, trusting, honouring

nouring and serving of him : All which being imply'd in this Expression, and consequently requir'd in this Commandment, must be briefly handled.

1. The having of a God implies the loving of him above all things. Love is that Passion of the Soul, that inclines it to unite itself to an Object that appears to it good and desirable. I style it *a Passion of the Soul*, because 'tis seated within, and resides not in the Lip or the Tongue, but in the Heart ; and therefore our Saviour wills us, to *love God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind : And the Apostle, To love not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth.* Again,

I style it a Passion of the Soul, *that inclines it to unite itself to something.* This is a natural and constant Fruit of Love, to desire the greatest Intimacy and nearest Union, to delight in the Company and closest Embraces of the beloved Object : 'tis impatient of its Absence, and nothing pleases more than the Sight and Enjoyment of it.

Lastly, I style it a Passion that inclines to unite with something *that appears good and desirable* ; for if it appear otherwise, 'twill be the Object of our Hatred, not of our Love : nothing but what is really or apparently good can affect this Passion, or be belov'd by us.

Now God being the greatest Good, infinitely good in himself, and the Fountain of all Goodness in his Creatures, is to have our highest and most superlative Love. The very Notion of a God implies a Being that hath all Perfection, and whatever is good in any other, is merely deriv'd from him ; and therefore he being in the highest respects lovely, is to have the chiefest Seat in our Affection, yea, he is to have our whole Heart, and our strongest Desires : and these are to discover themselves in a desire of pleasing, and a desire of enjoying him, which are the constant Fruits and Effects of true Love.

(1.) The Love we bear unto God must discover itself in hearty Desires and Endeavours of pleasing him ; he that loves another will be doing what is most grateful and pleasing to him. And as a Tree is known by its Fruit, so may our Love to God be discern'd by this Touchstone : *If you love me (saith Christ) keep my Commandments : John 14. 15.* And elsewhere, *Hereby know we the Love of God, if we keep his Commandments.*

(2.) The Love of God will put us upon strong Desires of enjoying him, making us to say with *David, As the*

Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God : My Soul is athirst for God ! Oh when shall I come and appear in the Presence of God ! This will make us desirous of enjoying him in his Ordinances now and to unite with him in Grace here, that we may be fitted for a more complete Fruition of him in Glory hereafter. In a word,

To have a God, is thus to love and be affected towards him, which should put us all upon the Trial of our Affection to him, to cherish this sacred Flame where we find it, and to enkindle it in the Breasts where 'tis wanting.

2. The having of a God implies the Fear of him : This is such an awful Regard and Reverence of the Divine Majesty, as makes us afraid to offend or displease him. And as the Love of God is grounded on the transcendent Excellency and Goodness of his Nature, which makes us willing to please and enjoy him ; so the Fear of him is founded on his infinite Power and Justice, which may well enough make us afraid to provoke him. He that considers the Justice of God to be such, that he cannot clear the Guilty ; and likewise that his Power is great enough to reach and humble the stoutest Offenders, may be easily induc'd to stand in awe of him, and be fearful of displeasing him : and therefore our Saviour wills us to *fear him, who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. The Psalmist bids us to *serve the Lord with Fear, and to rejoice before him with Trembling* ; Psal. 2. 11. yea, the Wise-Man declares the *Fear of the Lord to be the beginning of Wisdom* : and elsewhere, 'tis made the end of the Commandments, and in some sense the fulfilling of the Law.

There is indeed a servile slavish Fear, proceeding from wrong Apprehensions of God, as a sour, stern and implacable Being ; and the Love before-mention'd expels this kind of Fear, which disposes Men not only to dread, but to hate him. In this sense it is, that the Apostle tells us, *There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out Fear ; and he that thus feareth is not made perfect in Love*. But there is a more ingenious and filial Fear, proceeding from a sense of the Goodness, as well as the Power of God, which renders Men not only afraid, but asham'd to offend him. This is that Fear recommended by the Prophet, who wills us to *fear the Lord for his Goodness*, and is that awful Reverence and Regard of him that is to be kept up in the Breasts of all good Christians ; for this is both a Spur to

quicken them to their Duty, and a Curb to restrain them from the Practice of Evil: and therefore we find frequent Exhortations to this Virtue, to *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, and to *serve God acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear*; which is one great Act of our having or owning him for our God.

3. The having of a God, implies the worshipping and adoring of him: This is a Tribute we all owe to the Supreme Being, and is indeed peculiar to him; to acknowledge his infinite and adorable Perfections: to pray to him for all that we want, and to praise him for all that we receive; to be sensible of our daily Need and Dependence upon him; to implore his Aid and Assistance in all our Affairs, and to ask his Blessing upon all that we undertake; to beseech him to avert from us all manner of Evil, and to bestow upon us all kinds of Good; and that not only for ourselves, but for all others that we stand oblig'd to pray for. All this we find frequently call'd for, and inculcated upon us; *Let Prayers and Supplications, Intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all Men*, 1 Tim. 2. 1. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perseverance*; Eph. 6. 18.

This Homage is to be paid to him, not only in publick, by the solemn and unanimous Addresses of the whole Church, but likewise in private, by the joint Requests of each particular Family; and in secret too, by the hearty and devout Prayers of the Closet. Moreover, this Divine Worship is to be offer'd up, partly with our Souls, in inward desires and breathings after him; partly with our Bodies, by bowing down and kneeling before him, and in all the decent Postures of Humility and Adoration. All this is included in the owning or having a God; of which 'twill behove us therefore to be always mindful.

4. The having of a God, implies our trusting and relying upon him. The first Conception we form of a Deity, is his being the Omnipotent Creator and Conserver of the World, that he made all things by his Power, and still preserves them by his Providence; both which are sufficient Motives of our Trust and Confidence in him: for these may abundantly satisfy us, that he wants neither Ability nor Will to help us in our greatest Extremities. Hence we find our Blessed Saviour cautioning his Followers against all carking and anxious Care about earthly things; willing them to take no perplexing *Thoughts of Food or Raiment*; for

he that feeds the Beasts, and clothes the Grass of the Field, will not see his own Children to lack Necessaries : *After these things* (says he) *do the Gentiles seek*, who know not God ; whereas our *Heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things ; and if we seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, these things shall be added unto us.* To the same purpose the Apostle wills us, to cast all our Care upon him who careth for us : Not that we should neglect the Duties of our Calling, or throw off all Care of our own Safety and Welfare ; but that we banish all distrustful Fears of Divine Providence, and *commit ourselves to God in well doing ;* not going out of his way, nor betaking our selves to any indirect Means to provide for our own Safety, but relying upon him for the supply of all our Wants, and for support in all Dangers and Temptations. This the Knowledge and Belief of a God exacts from us, and therefore ought at all times, and in all cases to be perform'd by us.

5. The having of a God, implies the honouring and glorifying of him : This the transcendent Excellencies both of his Nature and Works justly challenge from us ; for there are those apparent Marks of Infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, upon all the Works of his Hand, that may set all considering Persons upon the magnifying and adoring of him. We find the Royal Psalmist spending the greatest part of his time, in extolling, praising and glorifying of God, and likewise calling upon others to do the same ; *I will magnify thy Name, O Lord, and praise my God while I have my Being. Praise the Lord, all ye Saints, for a pleasant and joyful thing it is to be thankful.*

Now this honouring of God, is to speak and think worthily of him, to endeavour to be like him in all his imitable Perfections, and to direct all our Actions to his Glory. To these we have many Precepts and Examples in Holy Scripture ; *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do* (says the Apostle) *do all to the Praise and Glory of God ;* 1 Cor. 10. And elsewhere, *Glorify God both in your Souls and Bodies, which are his.* Yea, we find God himself challenging this from us by the Relation he stands in to us, *If I be a Father, where is my Honour ?* says the Lord of Hosts : And likewise encouraging to the practice of it ; *Them that honour me, I will honour ; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteem'd.*

Lastly,

Lastly, The having of a God, implies the serving him truly all the days of our Life. Among other Titles and Relations which God takes upon him, we find him styling himself our Lord and Master, who hath therefore the Right to command and govern us. Now the Duty of a Servant, we know, is to obey, and that not with a grumbling and unwilling Mind, but with a chearful and ready Obedience: And this is more especially due to our Master in Heaven, who is both our Maker and Redeemer; and therefore to be serv'd truly, that is, *not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but with a ready Mind as unto the Lord, and not unto Men.* Moreover, he is to be serv'd, not only sincerely but constantly, that is all the days of our Life; we must not shrink from, or grow weary of his Service, but persevere and hold on in it, even to the End.

All these things are included in the having of a God, which is the first thing requir'd in this Commandment. The

Second is, That we are not only to have or own a God, but to have the Lord *Jehovah*, or the true God for our God; for when we are commanded to have no other God beside him, it manifestly implies that we are to have him for our God: meaning, that the God of *Israel* that brought them out of the Land of Egypt, as appears by the Preamble, is to be taken for the true God, and to receive the foremention'd Acknowledgments. The Ground-work of all Religion, and the Foundation of all our Hope, lie in owning and believing the true God, and therefore it was fit that this should be known and settled in the first Commandment; for a Mistake here would be not only dangerous, but deadly, and at once corrupt the Worship, and destroy the whole Design and Success of it: for which reason, we are here directed and requir'd to have the one true God, or the Lord *Jehovah* for our God. He of whom *Moses* affirms, that he made Heaven and Earth; He who made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and miraculously deliver'd the *Israelites* out of the House of Bondage, is here made the Object of our Adoration; He it is that is to have our Prayers, Praises, and all Divine Honours. In a word, He it is that must be lov'd, fear'd, and trusted above all things. For this we have abundant reason, not only from the Excellence of his Nature, and the Greatness of his Works, but from our intire Dependence upon him for *Life, Breath, and all things.* Hence we

we find *Moses* declaring him to be *glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders*. And the Elders in the *Revelation* are ever saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour and Glory, for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created*.

Beside, he hath bless'd the World with the best Revelation of Divine Truths that was ever made to it; he hath given the most rational, just and equitable Laws to Mankind, and crowns all their Service with the most noble and ample Reward: which is abundant encouragement to have the Lord for our God, the second thing requir'd in this Commandment. The

Third and Last is, That we should have Him only, or no other beside Him; meaning, that we should make the true God, or the God of *Israel*, the sole Object of Divine Worship, and give no Divine Honours to any else: and so 'tis in effect the same with that Precept of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. This was indeed the principal thing intended in this Commandment; for the *Israelites* to whom this Law was first given, were too prone to forget God, to fall into Idolatry, and worship the Gods of the *Egyptians*: and therefore to prevent this, he minds them of the peculiar Right he had in them, and the great things he had done for them; beginning the Decalogue with this strict Precept, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*. Which words may admit of a double Sense; either *thou shalt have no other Gods before*, that is above me; or, *thou shalt have no other Gods before*, that is, beside or together with me.

1. They who love, fear, or trust to any thing more than God, as the Worldling does to *Mammon*, have other Gods before or above the true God; for which reason the covetous Man is styl'd an *Idolater*. Again,

They who make their Belly their God, and delight chiefly in Luxury and Intemperance, have other Gods above him: They who give the chiefest of their Time and Affections to sinful Pleasures, and prefer the Serving of their Lusts, before the Service of their Maker, have other Gods, and set up the Abomination of their Eyes and Hearts above him. Moreover,

They who give more Divine Honour, and offer up more Prayers and Praises to other Things or Persons than to the true God, have other Gods before or above him; of which

which they may do well to consider, who for one *Pater-Noster* made to God, have ten *Ave-Maries* to the Blessed Virgin.

2. They that join any in Co-partnership with the true God, or set up any Rival Deities, have other Gods before or beside him. This was the Fault of the *Samaritans*: of whom we read, That *they feared the Lord, and served their own Gods, after the manner of the Nations, whom God carried away from thence*; 2 Kings 17. 33. They mix'd and blended the Service of the true, with that of false Gods: And how much the worshipping of Saints and Angels, and the giving Divine Honours to other things beside God, does resemble this, it will behove some Persons to consider.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment, namely, to own the only true God, and to demean ourselves towards him, suitable to his Greatness and our Dependence upon him: To this, not only the Authority of our Maker, but our own Interest; that is, our present Peace, and our future Happiness, are sufficient Motives to incline us.



DISCOURSE V.

EXOD. XX. 3.

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

I Shew'd in my last, the Duties requir'd in this first Commandment; which were, to have a God, to have the True God, and to have no other beside him: I proceed now to consider what is forbidden in it, which are chiefly these three great Sins, opposite to the foremention'd Duties.

First, Atheism, which is the having of no God.

Secondly, Idolatry, which is the having of a false God.

Thirdly, Polytheism, which is the having of more or many Gods. All which must be briefly explain'd, that we may the better learn to hate and avoid them. And,

First,

First, I must begin with that great daring Sin of Atheism, here forbidden as the Rise and Foundation of all Impiety: for if Religion be founded on the having of a God, then all Ungodliness and Irreligion must proceed from denying of him. Of this the Psalmist speaks, in *Psal. 14. 1. The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.* And then it follows, *Corrupt are they, and become abominable; there is none that doth good, no not one.* Where he plainly supposes, that there are but too many who vainly surmise there is no God; and likewise brands all those for Fools who say or think so, as running them into the greatest Evils and Dangers. Now the Atheism here forbidden, is both Speculative and Practical. The

Former is the inward Belief of the Mind, that there is no God: the latter is the living and acting as if there were none.

For the *1st*; Since the Volume of the Creation lies open to the view of all, in which the invisible things of God are so clearly seen, even his Eternal Power and Godhead; it cannot but seem strange, that any should be found to question or disbelieve either: yea, since the Voice of Nature and Conscience is so loud, that *the sound of them is gone over the World, and there is no Speech or Language where their Voice is not heard*; one would think it impossible for any to doubt or deny his Being, were it not that the sad Experience of former as well as the present times may convince us, that the World always had some such Monsters. But these being not so numerous, and being condemn'd by the general vogue and consent of Mankind, who almost universally own a first Cause of all Things, and feel a natural Inclination to worship him; I shall leave these to the Terrors and Convictions of their own Mind, and proceed,

2dly, To the practical Atheists, who by their Words profess to own and believe a God, but in their Works deny him: And with these, alas! the World does but too much abound, who pretend to own a Deity, and yet live as if there were none. Such practical Atheists are as bad, if not worse, than the speculative; for to slight and contemn a God, whom we acknowledge for such, is worse than barely to disbelieve him. He who thinks there is no God, acts agreeable to his Persuasion, when he refuses to worship or fear what is not; whereas he that owns a Being of infinite

finite Power and Goodness, and yet casts off the Fear or Love of him, acts of all Men the most absurdly; for he acts contrary to his Persuasion, and confutes his own Pretences. The speculative Atheist neglects his Maker, but the practical Atheist contemns him; the one denies his Being, the other reproaches his Nature, and highly affronts him whom he would be thought to serve.

Now this is plainly forbidden in this Commandment; for if the having of a God here requir'd imply the Love, Fear and Worship of such a Being; then the contrary to these, which suppose the rejecting of him, must be here condemn'd. So that,

1. The casting off the Love of God, either in whole or in part, is a manifest breach of this Commandment: for if the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, and our great Obligations to his Goodness, render him the proper Object of our Love, and require the most superlative degrees of Affection; then all Coldness or Lukewarmness toward him must be a sinful neglect, and rather a disowning him, than having him for our God. If we are commanded to *love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and with all our Strength*; then to set our Heart upon any thing more than him, is to become unworthy of him, by acting unworthily towards him.

2. The casting off the Fear of God, and entertaining false and unbecoming Fears of him, are both forbidden in this Commandment, as inconsistent with the true Belief and owning of such a Being: the former of these is the Sin of Supineness or carnal Security, which is the not fearing where we ought; the latter of Superstition, which is the *fearing where no Fear is*: the one proceeds from the having no thoughts of God; the other from having wrong thoughts of him. The Psalmist speaks of some, that *they have no Fear of God before their Eyes*; and gives this reason of it, that *God was not in all their Thoughts; his Ways are always grievous to them, and his Judgments remov'd out of their sight*; Psal. 10. 4, 5. And 'tis no wonder if they fear not God, who seldom or never think of him. Again,

He tells us of others, that *fear where no Fear is*: and this proceeds from wrong and mistaken Apprehensions of God, taking him for a sour, stern and severe Being, that is displeas'd at every thing, and often angry without a Cause. Of both these we have but too many Instances: Some having little or no awe or sense of a Deity, which makes them

run into an excess of Riot, and commit all Uncleanness with greediness. Others having base and servile Fears of him, which make them abstain from some indifferent and unforbidden Rites as displeasing to him, and to seek to please and atone him by many uncommanded Austerities; both which Practices being opposite to the true sense of having a God, are forbidden in this Commandment.

3. The casting off the Worship and Service of God is another piece of practical Atheism, condemn'd by this Commandment; for this, instead of having a God, is a virtual Contempt and denying of him. The very Notion of a Deity supposes him to be the Maker and Governour of the World, and the Preserver of all Things contain'd therein; upon which account there is a peculiar Homage and Service due to him: and this consists in acknowledging and adoring his infinite Perfections, in praying to him for what we want, and praising of him for all that we receive. Now to refuse this Homage is in effect to despise and disown him, and to say with them in the Book of *Job*, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*

4. The casting off our Trust and Dependence upon God, is another breach of this Commandment, for this is a virtual denial of most of his Attributes. God Almighty hath interested his Power, Wisdom and Goodness for the supply and succour of his People in all their Exigencies; he hath promis'd to give *Grace and Glory, and to withhold no good thing from them that diligently seek and trust to him*: whereby he hath engag'd his Truth and Faithfulness to defend and provide for them, and confirm'd all this with an Oath for their greater Security and Consolation. Now to distrust him after all this, is to call in question his Power, Goodness and Truth, and to doubt whether he be able or willing to be as good as his word: both which, cast unworthy Reflections upon his Nature, and undermine the Belief of his Being. 'Tis for this reason that Unbelief and Distrust of God are so severely sentenc'd in Holy Scripture, because they virtually put the Lye upon Truth itself, and charge the Almighty with Impotence or Imposture.

Lastly, The casting off the Yoke of Obedience to the divine Precepts, is practical Atheism, and in effect the having of no God, which is prohibited in this Commandment: for we owe to the supreme Being, not only the Tribute of Love, but the Homage of Subjection and Obedience; and

a firm Belief of him will draw this after it, and enforce this Duty upon us. So that where this is refus'd or neglected, Men shake off the Yoke, and say in effect, they will not have him for their God, or own him as their Lord and Master. In short,

All unbecoming Carriage towards our Maker, all demeaning our selves unsutable to our Relation to, or Dependence upon him, are here condemn'd by this Law, as a direct affront to his Authority and Attributes; and they who allow themselves in any ungodly Courses, deny God in their Lives, tho they own him with their Lips, and act upon a Principle of Atheism and Infidelity, the first great Sin forbidden in this Commandment, *the having of no God.* The .

Second is Idolatry, which is the *having of a false God*: This was the Sin of the *Egyptians* and other idolatrous Nations, against whom this Commandment was first level'd; for the *Israelites*, whom God had selected for his own peculiar People, living and conversing among them, were too prone to fall into their ways, and in danger of being infected by their Idolatries: and therefore to prevent this, God Almighty, consulting his own Glory and their Good, gave them this Precept, that they should *have no other Gods but him*. We find the *Egyptians* and others substituting false Gods in the room of the true, and giving those divine Honours to Creatures, that were due only to the Creator: they worship'd the Sun, Moon and Stars, with the whole Host of Heaven; being tempted thereunto by the good Influence they have on this lower World, and the many Benefits they receiv'd thereby: they paid divine Honours to Beasts, inanimate Creatures, and all manner of creeping Things; yea, they fell down to Stocks and Stones, and other Workmanship of their own Hands. The *Egyptians* had their *Apis* and *Serapis*, whom they worship'd in the form of a Calf; their Gods grew in their Gardens, for they paid their Devotions to Mint and Rue, and shed religious Tears before the Leek and the Onion. These idolatrous Practices had too much prevail'd upon God's own People, for we find them so inveigled by them, that *Aaron* and the *Israelites*, in *Moses's* absence, fell to making and worshipping a molten Calf: And when they were brought out of that Land, even in their Journey to *Canaan*, they often hanker'd after the Leeks and Onions of *Egypt*. And being

so

so prone to Idolatry, and to be carry'd away to the worshipping of false Gods, this Precept was again renew'd and enforc'd upon them in the Book of *Deuteronomy*; in which they were strictly charg'd, to *have no other Gods but him*.

But this grosser sort of Idolatry being now rarely found in the Christian World, I shall not need to enlarge farther upon it.

There is then another sort of Idolatry forbidden in this Commandment, and that is the worshipping of Saints and Angels and the Virgin *Mary*, and giving those divine Honours to Creatures that are due to God only: this the Apostle condemns as Will-worship, *Col. 2. 18.* and was refus'd by the Angel in the *Revelation*, saying, *See thou do it not, worship God.* There is indeed a civil Worship due to the Virtues of great and good Men, and some kind of Veneration may be paid to the Memories of departed Saints; but for the religious Honours of Adoration, Prayer and Invocation, those are peculiar to God only, and may not without Idolatry be communicated to any Creature. But beside this,

There is another sort of Idolatry too common among Men; and that is, the paying higher degrees of Love, Fear and Trust to any other Thing than we do to God. This is to make that, whatever it be, our God; and by giving it the highest room in our Affections, we set up an Idol in our Heart; which is the having to ourselves a false God, the second great Sin forbidden in this Commandment. The

Third and Last is Polytheism, which is the having many or more Gods than one. This seems to be condemn'd by the Letter of this Law, in which God, to preserve his People from Multiplying of Deities, according to the Custom of the Heathens, willed them to *have no other Gods but himself*. The *Chaldeans*, *Philistines* and *Egyptians* of old multiply'd their Gods, according to the number of their Cities; they had a God for each particular Blessing they wanted, and implor'd a distinct Deity for every Disease: yea, their number grew so great at last, that according to *Varro's* Computation they amounted to three thousand. The Gentiles, as the Apostle tells us, *worshipped they knew not what*; the *Athenians* erected an Altar to the *unknown God*; and some, to increase the number of their Gods, worshipped the very Devil.

The

The Idolatry of these Heathens consisted in giving divine Worship where they should not, which might be to any one false God; but their Polytheism consisted in heaping up Deities, and having more Gods than they should: So that tho all Polytheism be Idolatry, yet all Idolatry is not Polytheism. Now to prevent both these, to which the World was at that time too much addicted, God Almighty gave this strait Charge, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

Indeed the very Notion of a God implies Unity, and cannot be more than One: 'Tis absurd to affirm, there can be two first Causes of all things, nor can there be more independent Beings upon which all Things else depend, both which are imply'd in the Notion of a Deity; and therefore to have more Gods than one, is in effect to have none at all.

Thus we see both what is requir'd in this first Commandment, viz. to have the only true God for our God, and to love, fear, trust, and honour him accordingly; and likewise what is forbidden in it, namely, the having of no God, a false God, or many Gods: all which are highly offensive to our Maker, and destructive of all Religion. To conclude then,

Let us hence learn to demean our selves as we ought to God Almighty, not substituting any thing in his room, nor taking any in Co-partnership with him, but making him the sole and entire Object of our Honour and Adoration.



DISCOURSE VI.

EXODUS XX. 4, 5, 6.

Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, nor the Likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth: Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shewing Mercy to thousands, in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.

GOD Almighty having in the first Commandment settled the true Object of divine Worship, and confin'd it wholly to himself, in opposition to all manner of Idols or false Gods; he proceeds in this second Commandment to direct us in the right manner of performing it: which is not by any Images or visible Representations of him, but in a more spiritual manner, and in a way suited to his Nature and Will. This is the Design of these words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, &c.*

Now this Commandment being Negative, I must consider first what is forbidden, and then what is commanded in it. I begin then with what is forbidden, and that is chiefly these two Things, the *Making*, and the *Worshipping* of any graven Image. For the

First, We are here expressly forbidden to *make to ourselves any graven Image, or the Likeness, &c.*

Not that all making of Images, Pictures or Representations of any Creature is hereby prohibited, or that the Trade of the Painter, Carver or Engraver are simply unlawful, as some have vainly imagin'd: for we find some Images made and appointed by the order of God himself,

as the Cherubims, the golden Mice, the brazen Serpent, and the like; and *Moses* ascribes the Skill of *Aboliab* and *Bezaleel*, in working the Work of an Engraver, to the Holy Spirit of God, *Exod.* 35. 31. So that all Images or Representations of things are not here absolutely forbidden, for that would condemn all Pictures or Likeness of any Thing, and render our very Coin unlawful.

But the Images here forbidden to be made, are Images of God, or Representations of the Divine Nature, which being spiritual and immaterial, may not be represented by any Bodily Shape; yea, God being infinite and incomprehensible, cannot be represented by, or thought to be inclos'd in any Image, without debasing and disparaging of him. And therefore the Prophet asks the question, *To whom will ye liken God?* or what likeness will ye compare to him? *Isa.* 40. 18. The Apostle wills us *not to think the Godhead to be like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by the Art and Invention of Men*, *Acts* 17. 29. And much less to change the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, to Birds, or four-footed Beasts, or creeping Things; *Rom.* 1. 23.

There is such a vast disproportion between an Image and the Divine Nature, that we cannot liken one to the other without belying and affronting it: for since an Image can only be made of Corporeal Things, and such as are finite and corruptible, to make an Image of God, is to bring down that infinite Being to the scantiness and dimensions of a finite Creature, and in effect to deny the Spirituality and Incorruptibility of his Nature. And therefore we find a very strict Charge given to the *Israelites* against this Image-making, *Deut.* 4. 15. *Take good heed unto yourselves, for you saw no Image in the day when the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the Fire, that you corrupt not yourselves, and make you a graven Image.* And in this Commandment we have an express Prohibition of making any Likeness of God by any thing, *either in Heaven above,* as by the Sun, Moon and Stars; *or in the Earth beneath,* as by the Fowls of the Air, the four-footed Beasts or creeping Things; *or in the Water under the Earth,* by the Fish, or any thing that walks through the Paths of the Sea; no, nor yet by the Likeness of Man, the Lord of all these. For tho God made Man in his own Image, yet Man is not to make God in his, by reason of the infinite distance and disproportion between them: and tho he be sometimes

describ'd in Scripture with Eyes, Hands and Arms, and the like, yet this is merely in compliance with our Infirmities, and is spoken after the manner of Men, and is to be understood in a way becoming the Divine Majesty; but cannot warrant the making any Image of him, or picturing him in a human Shape, which is to prostitute our Maker, and to think him such a one as ourselves: yea, this is to confine Ubiquity to a place, to circumscribe Immenfity, and to degrade the Deity to the Properties and Infirmities of Human Nature. We may not then represent God in a bodily Shape, or form false Apprehensions of him in our Mind, by making him like ourselves; the first thing forbidden in this Commandment.

Secondly, As we may not make, so much less are we permitted to worship any Image or Representation of God, *Thou shalt not bow down to it, or worship it*; where we have mention made of a twofold Worship: The one

External, consisting in the outward Reverence and Bowing of the Body. The other

Internal, in the inward Worship and Reverence of the Mind. Both which are here forbidden to be given to any Image.

1. We are forbidden to give any bodily Worship to Images, by bowing or falling down to them; *Thou shalt not bow down to them.* The Israelites were strictly charg'd *not to serve other Gods, or bow themselves unto them.* And such were sharply reprov'd, that *bowed the knee to Baal*, or fell down before any Idol. The Idolatry of the Heathens is frequently set forth by the Gestures of Incurvation, Prostration, Geniculation, and other visible Acts of bodily Reverence us'd to their false Deities; which being Tokens of the inward Delight and Devotion of their Minds towards them, were Invasions of God's Prerogative, and therefore strictly prohibited by him. But,

2. The internal Worship and Reverence of the Heart, is here chiefly forbidden to be given to Images; for this is to make them Gods, and to give the Glory due to God only, to the Works of Mens Hands, which is Idolatry to be abhor'd of all Christians.

3. Not only the worshipping of Images, but of God by them, is here forbidden in this Commandment. The worshipping of false Gods, is the Idolatry condemn'd in the first Commandment; the worshipping the true God in a false

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false way, is the Idolatry forbidden in this. The ruder and more barbarous Nations, that mistook the Object of Worship, and paid it to Socks and Stones, were guilty of the former; some of the wiser and more knowing among the Heathens, who when *they knew God*, yet *glorified him not as God*, were guilty of the latter: these two are in Scripture stil'd Idolaters, as we read in the first Chapter to the *Romans*, where these wiser Heathens are charg'd with it, because tho they knew God by the Creation of the World, yet they worship'd him in a way unsutable to his Nature, namely, by Images and corporeal Resemblances of him; *changing his Glory into the Similitude of Men, Beasts, and Birds*: and tho they did not terminate their Worship in the Images, but only serv'd God by them, it being impossible for the wiser part of them to take that for a God or Maker of the World, which they either made with their own Hands, or saw made with their own Eyes; yet their serving of God this way so unworthy of him, is in Scripture call'd Idolatry. This, some Persons in the World may do well to consider, who worship God much after the same way, and seek to salve it with the same Distinctions.

'Tis most certain that there is a peculiar and incommunicable piece of Homage due to the great Creator of all Things, upon the account of his infinite and adorable Perfections, and our great Obligations to him: this is what we call Divine Worship, and is challeng'd by God himself in the old Testament, and confin'd to him by our Saviour in the New, in those words; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. And tho they who give some of this elsewhere, as upon Images and other Things, would excuse it by making these things not the Objects of Worship, but only Means and Helps to direct and carry it farther, even to God himself; yet 'tis to be fear'd that too much of it falls by the way on the Image, and that God is robb'd of all that miscarries, or falls beside him. And therefore to prevent this, I shall proceed, in the

Next place, to the Sanction by which this Prohibition is enforc'd: and that is taken,

Partly, from God Almighty's Jealousy and Tendernefs for his Honour; *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God*. And partly, from his just Indignation and severe Punishment of those that violate and invade it; *Visiting the Iniquities of*

the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me. For the

First, The Jealousy of God is a sufficient Affrightment from offering this kind of Affront or Indignity to him : for if the Jealousy of a Man be justly to be dreaded of all that give occasion for it, because it stirs up the highest Resentment of such a violation of his Honour, and arms him with a more than ordinary Courage to vindicate it ; and tho the cause of it be Love, yet the effect is commonly Revenge and Ruin ; for which reason, *Solomon* styles Jealousy the *Rage of a Man*, Prov. 6. 34. certainly the Jealousy of God, who is more tender of his Honour, and far more able to repair it, is much more to be dreaded by all wilful Invaders of it.

That God is thus tender and jealous in this Case, impatient of any Rival, and will not admit any Sharers with him in the Love and Honour we are to pay him, himself hath frequently told us : *I am the Lord* (saith he by the Prophet *Isaiab*) *this is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, nor my Praise to graven Images* ; Isa. 42. 8. In this Commandment he adds, *I am the Lord thy God*, in Covenant with thee, having betroth'd thee to myself, and singled thee out to set my Love upon thee, and therefore will not bear the invading of my Honour, nor suffer thee to go a whoring after other Vanities : By this, Idolatry appears to be a spiritual Adultery, a Violation of the Love and Duty we owe to our Maker, express'd in Scripture by committing Fornication against him ; and is therefore said to provoke the Lord to Jealousy.

Now the Jealousy here ascrib'd to God must not be taken for such a disquieting vexatious Passion, as is wont to ruffle and discompose Mankind in such Cases ; for that is not compatible with the divine Nature ; but must be understood by way of Accommodation and Similitude, signifying that God will stand affected towards the Breakers of this Law, as Men are wont to be that are edg'd on and enrag'd by Jealousy ; and will deal with them as one mov'd with that violent Passion, tho at the same time it cannot in the least impair or interrupt his own Felicity. Furthermore,

The word *El-kanah* here signifies a Strong as well as a Jealous God, and gives us to understand that he is able to vindicate his Honour, and will certainly punish all the Injuries offer'd to it. Jealousy of itself without Strength is

but an impotent and contemptible Passion; but when arm'd with an Almighty Power, it is justly terrible: then 'tis *Cruel as the Grave* (as Solomon expresses it) *the Coals thereof are as the Coals of Fire, which break into a vehement Flame*; Cant. 8. 6. And therefore Moses in this very Precept about Images, minds the Israelites, *The Lord thy God is a consuming Fire, he is a jealous God*: And elsewhere brings in God Almighty thus declaring, *They have moved me to Jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to Anger with their Vanities: A Fire is kindled in mine Anger, and shall burn to the lowest Hell; and shall consume the Earth with her Increase, and set on fire the Foundations of the Mountains*; Deut. 32. 21, 22.

And now I may well enough ask the Apostle's Question of all that suffer their Hearts and Affections to stray from their Maker; *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy, are we stronger than he?* Can thy Heart bear up, or thy Hands be strong in the day that he shall deal with thee? No, 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God; into which, the forsaking of God, and the following of Idols, will certainly cast us.

And this will lead me to the

Second part of the Sanction of this Law, taken from the Justice of God in punishing the Breakers of it, in those words; *Visiting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me*. To visit is sometimes taken in a good sense, for beholding another with an eye of Pity and Compassion; in which sense David prays, *Visit me, O Lord, with thy Salvation*: Sometimes in a bad sense, for looking on with an eye of Fury and Revenge, and visiting with Judgments and Calamities; in which sense it occurs here, where God Almighty threatens to punish the Offenders against this Law, both in their Persons and Posterity. And,

1. He visits this Iniquity upon the Fathers themselves: of this kind the Holy Scriptures afford many Examples, God Almighty executing his Judgments upon Idolaters, and frequently punishing his own People, when they revolted from him, and set up their molten Images.

2. He visits this Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children: this we find verif'd in many of the Kings of Israel and Judah, who for their Idolatry were punish'd not only in their own Persons, but in their Posterity; God recompensing the Iniquity of the Fathers into the Bosom of their Children

Children after them; as we read, *Jer. 32. 18.* And the

3. *To the third and fourth Generation*; those being Generations which a Man may live to see. Now as the Prosperity of Children is one of the greatest Comforts of human Life, and all Parents delight to behold such flourishing Branches of themselves; so to see them in Misery and Trouble, is a most doleful and heart-breaking Prospect: And therefore God Almighty, to deter Men from the Transgressing of this Law, denounces Vengeance against the Posterity of such as break it, threatening *their Children the third and fourth Generation*, and punishing their Idolatries thro' the whole Line that they are capable of seeing by which it appears, that Sinners entail a Curse upon their Offspring, and make their Childrens Children miserable by their Impieties. But how can it consist with the Justice and Goodness of God, to punish the Children for their Parents faults? especially having declar'd, that *the Soul that sinneth that shall die; the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, nor the Father the Iniquity of the Son, but the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked upon him.* Now to this the Answer is easy and obvious. For,

(1.) God's visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children is always upon supposition of making their Fathers Sins their own, by imitating their Examples, and treading in the steps of their Impieties; for so God himself tells them, *If your Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Statutes, I will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Sins with Scourges*: otherwise, *if the Son forsake the Iniquities of his Father, he shall not die, he shall surely live, saith the Lord.*

God never visits the Sins of the Fathers upon penitent and reforming Children; but if they imitate their Fathers Wickedness, 'tis but just and righteous that they suffer for them: in which case, they are punish'd not for their Fathers Sins, but their own.

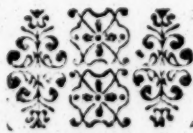
(2.) Because Idolatrous Parents are too apt to corrupt their Children by their evil Counsel and Example, God Almighty to deter them from it, threatens to punish the Fathers in their Children; which he may as well do, as in their Houses and Estates, or any thing that appertains to them: for Children are a part of the Goods and Substance of the Parents, who are deeply concern'd in their Welfare or Misery; and therefore God may justly visit them in those dearest Pledges

of themselves, if they mislead them into their Impieties : in which case he doth not so much make the Children suffer the Punishment of their Fathers Sin, as the Fathers suffer for their own.

(3.) God Almighty may and often doth visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon their Children with temporal Punishments : in which case tho the Calamity be the Child's, yet the Punishment is properly the Father's ; he is wounded in one of the nearest and tenderest parts of himself, tho it may work together for good to the repenting Child. Indeed God never visits the Fathers Sins upon the Children with eternal Punishments, in which sense every one must bear his own Burden ; but he justly may and doth with temporal Evils, for the Correction and Amendment of both.

But who are the Persons against whom this Threat is denounc'd ? Why, that the next words will inform us, in which he is said to visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children *in them that hate him* ; that is, in them that transgress his Laws : for as the *loving of God* is express'd by *keeping his Commandments*, so the *breaking of them* is styl'd *the hating of him*. But Idolaters and the Worshippers of Images are more especially call'd Haters of God : for as the Adulteress shews her hatred and contempt of her Husband, by giving herself to the Embraces of another ; so they cast off the Love of God, who go a whoring after their own Inventions : and they who give that Worship to Images that is due to God only, may be truly said to hate him.

But there is another Branch of the Sanction of this Law, taken from the Goodness of God both to the Persons and Posterities of those that *love him and keep his Commandments*, which shall be consider'd in the next.



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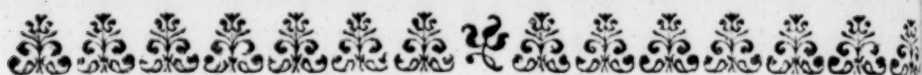
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DISCOURSE VII.

EXOD. XX. 4, 5, 6.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, nor the Likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, &c. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me, and shewing Mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my Commandments.

HAVING spoken of the Negative part of this Precept, which forbids the making and worshipping of Images; I proceed to the Affirmative part of it, or what is requir'd in it: And that is, the worshipping of God in a right way, or after a due manner; which (as appears by what has been said before) is the worshipping of him in any way sutable to his Nature and Will.

1st, I say, this Commandment requires us to serve God in a way sutable to his Nature; that is, not by Images or corporeal Resemblances: for he having no bodily Parts, is not to be represented in a bodily Shape, which is to debase and belye him; but being a spiritual Substance, must be serv'd with a spiritual Worship: for so our Saviour declares, *John 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth.* For the better clearing whereof, we may note,

I. That the worshipping of God in Spirit and Truth doth not exclude all bodily Worship, as we shall see by and by: for this, tho perform'd by the Body, is nevertheless spiritual Worship; for it proceeds from the Spirit of God exciting our Spirits to the performance of it, and is (as one has well observ'd) directed by a spiritual Rule, to a spiritual End, the Glory of God, and our own Salvation.

Nor

Nor yet, 2. Does the worshipping of God in Spirit exclude all serving of him with Rites and Ceremonies ; for God's appointing them under the Law, when he was as much a Spirit, and requir'd to be serv'd in Spirit as well as now ; and likewise his enjoining the Rites and Ceremonies of the two Sacraments under the Gospei ; shew these not to be inconsistent with spiritual Worship, but rather Helps and Furtherances of it.

To worship him then in Spirit and Truth, is to worship him with our Spirits, and not with the Tongue only ; to draw nigh to him with our Hearts, and not barely with the Lips ; and to serve him truly and sincerely, in opposition to all feign'd, formal, and hypocritical Service. In short, to serve him suitably to his Nature, is to have our Affections stirring towards him in a way becoming his several Attributes ; that is, to love him for his Goodness, to fear him for his Greatness, to trust him for his Faithfulness, and to honour him for all his divine and adorable Perfections.

2dly, To worship God aright, we are to do it not only in a way suitable to his Nature, but likewise agreeable with his Will ; that is, we must serve him according to his Direction and Appointment, and no otherwise : for divine Worship being that Homage, which as Creatures we owe to our great Creator, 'tis but fit that he himself should have the ordering of it, and that we should do in it as he hath commanded : to do otherwise, is to disclaim his Authority and to be guided only by our own Will, which is the worst sort of Will-worship.

But here it may be ask'd, whether nothing may be done in the Worship of God, but what is expressly commanded by him ? To which I answer, by distinguishing between the substantial parts of divine Worship, and the accidental or alterable Circumstances of it. As for the

Substantial part of Religion, consisting of all that is necessary to be believ'd or done in order to Salvation, that requires the express Precept and Revelation of God, without which nothing is to be so esteem'd : for God himself is the best Judge both how he should, and how he will be serv'd ; and having deliver'd his mind about it in Holy Scripture, we are to make that the Rule and Standard of our Duty : to add to it, would be to charge it with Imperfection, and to make a new Religion of our own. But for the

Circum-

Circumstantial part of divine Worship, such as Time, Place, Gesture, and the like; these being not particularly determin'd by God in the Holy Scripture, are in a great measure left to every one's Discretion in their private Worship, and to the Prudence and Authority of Superiors in the publick Service of the Church, whom we are bid to obey in such things for the Lord's sake.

But here Care must be taken,

1. That the Rites and Ceremonies so enjoin'd be suitable to those general Rules of Order, Decency, and Edification, prescrib'd by God himself, and that they be every way fitting and becoming his Service.

2. That they be not too numerous and cumbersome, lest they prove a Clog rather than Convenience to the divine Service. And,

Lastly, That they neither be enjoin'd or observ'd as essential parts of Worship, or as things in themselves pleasing unto God and necessary to Salvation; for this is to add to the Substance of Religion, and to *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; but only as outward Circumstances for the Order and Comeliness of publick Worship, and as things that may vary, as Times, and Place, and other Occasions may require. And where these Conditions are observ'd, the Service thus injoin'd and perform'd is agreeable to the Will of God, and is part of the Duty here requir'd in this Commandment.

By which it appears, that the Worship of God here inculcated upon us in this Precept, is partly Internal, and partly External.

The Internal part of it is the Worship of our Hearts and Souls, whereby we inwardly admire and adore his divine Excellencies, esteeming, loving, fearing and trusting him as our great Creator and best Benefactor: and all this not in Pretence and Appearance only, but in Sincerity and Truth, *not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth*, from the very bottom of the Heart.

The External part of this Worship, is the Worship of the Body or outward Man, whereby we express the inward Reverence of the Mind, by the outward humble Gestures of the Body; which God frequently calls for, and *David* exhorts to in those words, *O come let us worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*. This some Expositors of this Commandment have thought to be principally intended and requir'd in it; making the former,

mer, that is, the internal Worship of the Soul, to be requir'd in the first Commandment: the latter, *viz.* the external Worship of the Body, to be commanded in this: in which, as God forbids the bowing down or giving any bodily Worship to graven Images, so he requires the Bowing down and other Gestures of bodily Adoration to be given to himself. But because these humble Gestures, and all other Acts of bodily Reverence have been decry'd and impugn'd by some, and are still but too much neglected by others; it will be requisite to add something, to recommend and enforce this bodily Worship upon us. To which end, we may observe,

1. That as he challenges this external Worship as due to himself, so he threatens to punish all such as give it to any other: he here forbids the bowing or falling down to any graven Image, as an Invasion of his Prerogative, and shews that the prostituting our Bodies as well as Souls to them, will stir up his Jealousy. How sharply are the *Israelites* reprov'd for bowing the knee to *Baal*? And the Idolatry of the Heathens is frequently express'd in Scripture, by their *serving other Gods, and bowing themselves unto them*, Josh. 23. 16. Whereby it appears, that as these visible Acts of outward Worship are not to be paid to any false Deities, so are they claim'd, and to be carefully perform'd to the true God.

2. God Almighty created the Body as well as the Soul, and united them together for his Service, and therefore he expects the Homage of both. Indeed the Service of the Heart and the Soul is what he principally regards and calls for: *My Son, give me thy Heart*, saith he; that being the best Offering we can make to a spiritual and immaterial Being; without which, all other Service is but dead and unfavorable. But yet he hath an eye likewise to the Service of the Body, and expects the Humility and Adoration of the outward Man; he calls for the Ear, to hear Instruction; for the Eyes, to be lifted up in Prayer; for the Tongue, to speak the Praises of our Maker: In a word, he expects that our whole Man should bow with the profoundest Awe and Reverence to him, before he will bow his Ear, or incline to hear us; and justly too, for 'tis he that made us, and not we ourselves; 'tis he that fram'd and sustains our Bodies, and therefore all the Members of it are to be employ'd and devoted to his Service.

3. Our Bodies as well as Souls partake of the Benefits of Christ's Redemption; and therefore both are to be dedicated to him, and to join together in his Service: *Ye are bought with a Price*, saith the Apostle; which he affirms thereof the whole Man, both Body and Soul, which are both the Purchase of his Blood, and justify'd by his Redemption for which reason he tells us *we are not our own*, to dispose and order ourselves as we please; but being *bought with a Price*, *we are to glorify God in our Bodies, and in our Spirits which are both his*, 1 Cor. 6. last. In the verse immediately preceding, he styles our Bodies the Temples of the Holy Ghost, in which therefore we are to worship our Maker, and being redeem'd and sanctify'd by his Holy Spirit, ought to be consecrated to his Service.

Lastly, We hope to be glorify'd hereafter in our Bodies as well as Souls, and therefore both are to glorify God here. Many and great things are declar'd concerning the future Felicity of our Bodies, that they shall be *fashion'd like unto Christ's glorious Body*, being impassible and incorruptible like his, and made for ever Vessels of Honour fitted and prepar'd for our Master's use: and being to be crown'd with such invaluable Blessings hereafter, 'tis but reasonable to fit them for it, by engaging them in his Service here; *presenting our Bodies to him, as a living, holy, and acceptable Sacrifice, which is our reasonable Service*.

Thus we see what is requir'd of us in this Commandment; namely, to raise our Minds above all gross Sense and Fancy in our Adorations of our Maker, not framing any outward Images or Resemblances to worship him by, as the manner of some is; nor forming any false Notions or Misrepresentations of him within, by thinking him such a one as ourselves, and serving him accordingly, as others do, who fondly imagine him delighted only or chiefly with new Phrases, and that he must be daily serv'd with suddenly-conceiv'd and varied Prayers: which Mistakes proceed from some false Ideas and Misapprehensions of him, which we are here willed to remove.

Moreover, we are here commanded to entertain high and worthy Thoughts of him; conceiving of him as a Being transcendently perfect, infinitely superior to all in Goodness, Justice, Wisdom, and Power; and so to be lov'd, fear'd and trusted above all, and directing all our Service to him with such Apprehensions: which is to *worship him in Spirit and in Truth*.

And

And this is to be done not only with the inward, but with the outward Man; that is, the Body as well as the Mind is to be employ'd in these Adorations. The negative Precept here, *Thou shalt not bow down to a graven Image*, includes the contrary positive Duty, *Thou shalt bow down to the Lord thy God*: meaning, that our bodily Worship, as well as that of the Mind, is due and must be paid to him. He that bows, or kneels, or uses any Posture of Reverence to a graven Image, breaks this Commandment by Idolatry: And he that refuses to bow or kneel, or use any reverent Posture in publick Worship unto God, breaks it by Sacrilege; for God is equally robb'd of his Honour, whether we give it to another, or deny it to himself.

This Commandment then as much requires us to bow down and kneel, and give bodily Worship unto God, as it forbids us to give it to a graven Image: And the Practice of holy Men in all Ages hath been accordingly, who have been equally forward to do the one, as to deny the other. In the Old Testament we find the People of God always using a Posture of Reverence in the Worship of God, by standing, or kneeling, or prostrating themselves; but we never read of any irreverently sitting at their Devotions. In the New Testament we find our blessed Saviour and his Disciples in all their Prayers unto God either bowing, kneeling, or prostrating themselves before him; which is that glorifying God with their Bodies enjoin'd and practis'd by them: And where this is neglected, he reckons himself dishonour'd and despis'd by us.

Indeed, the inward Reverence and Devotion of the Mind will evermore draw after it this outward Reverence of the Body: And therefore we find the whole Worship of God represented in Scripture by these external visible Acts of Adoration; the outward bending and bowing of the Body being both the Signs and Effects of the inward bending and submission of the Soul to him. Hence bowing and kneeling unto God is generally in Scripture us'd to signify the worshipping of him, as we may see in *Psal. 95. 5. Mic. 6. 6.*

This therefore is here requir'd to be paid unto God and no other: And that first because he is a *jealous God*, that is infinitely tender of this outward as well as inward Honour, and impatient of any Competitor in this incommunicable Homage that belongs to him. Again,

He

He threatens to visit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children to the fourth Generation of them that thus invade and defraud him of his Honour; that is, their Posterity shall fare the worse for it, their Childrens Children shall be capable of less Favour, and be more strictly and severely dealt with upon this score; the Justice whereof we before vindicated.

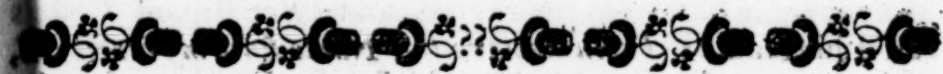
Lastly, To encourage the Observance of this Law, he adds, that he will *shew mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his Commandments*. Not that he will forbear to punish the offending Children of good Men; no, we find him declaring, That if their Children forsake his Law, and keep not his Commandments, he will visit their Transgression with the Rod, and their Sin with Scourges; nevertheless (saith he) my Loving-Kindness will I not utterly take from them; Psal. 89. 30, &c. that is, he will deal more favourably with them for their Parents sake. The Misdeeds of some shall not interrupt his Kindness to the rest of their Posterity, or blot out the Memory of their Goodness. This we find verifys'd in the Posterity of Abraham and the other Patriarchs, in whom God Almighty overlook'd many and great Provocations for their sake, mixing Mercy with Severity, and settling them at last in the promis'd Land. Moreover,

We may observe here the vast difference and disproportion between the Proceedings of God in the way of Justice and the way of Mercy: *He visiteth the Iniquities of disobedient Parents to the third or fourth Generation; but he sheweth Mercy to a thousand Generations* of those that obey him. He soon forgets the Wrongs done to him, but keeps our good Works in everlasting Remembrance: which may teach us not only to imitate him herein, but may likewise encourage us to serve and obey so good a Master.

Furthermore, lest any should vainly expect these Instances of Divine Goodness, without observing the Conditions annex'd to them, the last words of the Commandment confine them wholly to those that love God and keep his Commandments: where as the Revolters from God were before styl'd *Haters of him*, so they that obey his Laws, are here said to love him. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them* (saith our Saviour) *he it is that loveth me*; John 14. 15, 21. and elsewhere, *If any Man loveth me, he will keep my Word*,

Finally

Finally then, to conclude this Commandment, we learn hence the Happinels of descending from good Parents, who bequeath a Blessing, and derive Mercy upon their Offspring, in many Generations: And likewise the sad Misfortune of being born of disobedient Parents, who entail Misery and a Curse upon their whole Posterity; which should teach us, not only for our own, but our Childrens sake, to be ever mindful of keeping God's Laws, and very tender of breaking them.



DISCOURSE VIII.

EXOD. XX. 7.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.

HAVING finish'd the Second, I proceed to the third Commandment contain'd in the words read: in which we may easily observe,

1. A Precept, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

2. A Reason or Commination to enforce it; *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.*

The Precept being negative, I must begin with what is forbidden by it, which is, *the taking of God's Name in vain.*

For the fuller explaining whereof, 'twill be necessary to enquire,

First, What we are to understand here by the *Name of God*: And,

Secondly, What by *taking his Name in vain*. For the

First, A Name, we know, is that by which any thing is made known; and consequently the Name of God must signify all that by which he is made known unto us: And that is done, sometimes

By his Titles, as Jehovah, the Lord, God, and the like
Sometimes

By his Attributes and Properties, as Eternity, Immensity, Immutability, and the like. These we find frequently in Scripture call'd the Name of God; and when he proclaim'd his Name himself, he did it by these and other Attributes, styling himself, *The Lord, the Lord God, Gracious and Merciful, Long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth*; Exod. 34. 5, 6. And elsewhere he is call'd, *the Holy one of Israel, the Lord of Hosts, the Great and the Just one*, and the like. Moreover, sometimes the Word and Worship of God is call'd his Name; *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren*, Psal. 22. 22. that is, I will publish thy Word, and make known thy Worship. *I have manifested thy Name unto the Men that thou gavest me*, John 17. 6. that is, I have instructed them in the true Religion, and taught them the Worship of God, which they that observe and walk in, are said to *walk in the Name of the Lord*, Micah 4, 5.

Lastly, God is sometimes known by his Works, and therefore these may be compriz'd under his Name: *The Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth*; and his Works declare both his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. But tho we are never to speak slightly or dishonourably either of the Word or Works of God, yet by his Name here we are chiefly to understand his Attributes and Titles, as best representing the Nature and Being of God; it being a usual Figure to put the Name for the Thing or Person express'd by it.

But what is it to take this Name of God in vain? Why, this in general forbids all irreverent Use, or Abuse rather, of God's holy Name, in any matters, or upon any occasion whatever. More particularly it condemns,

I. All rash and inconsiderate Use of God's Name upon slight and trivial occasions; saying in common Speech (as too many do) O Lord! O God! upon any light matter; and crying out, Good Lord! or Good God! upon every piece of News they hear, without considering the Truth of the Fact, or the Greatness of the Majesty they invoke. 'Tis ordinary with some Persons to exclaim, O Jesu! O Christ! upon any strange Report or seeming Wonderment that happens; this is a great Fault, proceeding from Carelessness, or an habitual Irreverence, whereby God is highly dishonour'd, and his Sacred Name unworthily prostituted

and profan'd. *Holy and Reverend is his Name*, saith the Psalmist ; and elsewhere, *His Name is Wonderful and Holy* : and therefore may not be mention'd or us'd irreverently.

2. The uttering of rash, hasty, and indecent Expressions to and of God in Prayer, is *the taking his Name in vain*. Of this kind are those sudden *extempore* Effusions, which too many venture to pour out in their Addresses unto God ; in which they often cry out, O Lord ! and O God ! when they are at a loss what to say or ask of him. This was the fault of the Heathens of old, and of the Pharisees in our Saviour's time, who thought to be heard for their long Prayers and much Speaking ; to prevent which, he prescrib'd a Form of Prayer to his Disciples : which, with other decent Forms compos'd by it, hath been observ'd by the Church ever since, that we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear, and not rudely *take his Name in vain* in our Approaches to him.

3. To use the Name of God in rash Swearing, Cursing, and other Imprecations, is to take his Name in vain. This is what our Saviour forbids when he saith, *Swear not at all*, Mat. 5. 34. and St. James, *Above all things, my Brethren, swear not*, James 5. 12. Not that all Swearing is to be thought unlawful ; for we are commanded *to fear the Lord, and swear by his Name*, Deut. 6. 13. Swearing in Scripture is an Act of Religion, that is to be perform'd unto God as an Acknowledgment of his Attributes and Perfections ; we thereby own him to be the Searcher of Hearts, the Judge of Truth, and the Avenger of Falshood : so that the Act of Swearing in its own nature is so far from taking of God's Name in vain, that it implies a high Reverence and Estimation of him. Beside, an Oath is appointed to be *the end of all Strife*, and hath been us'd in all Times and Ages to that end ; which is enough to evince not only the Lawfulness, but the Usefulness and Necessity of it.

What then is the Swearing forbidden here, and condemn'd by Christ and his Apostles ? Why,

1. Both our Saviour and St. James condemn all Swearing by any Creature ; for so they both explain themselves : *Swear not at all, either by Heaven, for it is God's Throne, nor by Earth, for it is his Footstool ; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King ; neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black* : Mat. 5. 35, 36. Swearing is a part of that Worship and

Honour which is peculiar unto God, who hath requir'd us to swear only by his Name; and therefore we find the Israelites blam'd for swearing by them that were no Gods, Jer. 5. 7. This is to give that Honour to Creatures which is due to God only: *For Men verily swear by the greater* (saith the Apostle) and to swear by any other thing, is to make them greater than God, which is the greatest Indignity can be offer'd to him. This Practice was too rife among the Gentiles in our Saviour's time; for they swore by the Sun, Moon and Stars, by Fowl, Serpents, and any other thing that was next at hand. To check which Idolatry, our Saviour gave this strict Precept, of swearing not at all by Heaven, Earth, or any Creature therein: and likewise to remove the false Gloss of the Pharisees, who taught that if they did not forswear themselves, they might swear by the Temple, the Altar, and other things; which our Saviour condemns, as a high Derogation from the Honour of God, and as giving his Glory to another.

2. Both our Saviour and St. James condemn all rash and idle Swearing in common Discourse: for both of them add, *Let your Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, lest you fall into Condemnation; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.* By which 'tis evident, that all Swearing is forbidden in our ordinary Talk and Discourses with one another; in which we are not to go higher than Affirmation and Negation, without using any Imprecation, or calling in God to witness upon trivial and slight occasions; for this destroys all that Reverence and awful Fear we are to have of God, and prostitutes his Sacred Name to vile and idle purposes. And yet this is but too common a Practice among many that call themselves Christians, tho they are the Blemish and Scandal of that Name, and blaspheme that as they do the Name of God. Alas! what Vollies of Oaths proceed out of the mouths of some loose profane Wretches, enough to poison the Air that gives them breath, and to grate upon the ears of all that hear them? How frequent is it with such to back and adorn (as they think) their idle Talk with the venerable Name and Authority of God; and to call in the Divine Majesty to witness such trifling and absurd things, as a wise Man would not venture to speak, nor a good Man desire to hear? Yea, how common is it with these Men to call upon God to damn and sink them, as if they thought Divine Vengeance were asleep, and their Damnation slumber'd.

This

This is a gross Abuse and Profanation of the Holy Name of God, and a taking it in vain to their own Destruction; which vile Practice is so much the worse, because it hath nothing to justify or recommend it: 'Tis a Sin that is void of all Temptation, and admits of no Apology or Excuse. All other Sins have something or other to invite the Sinner to the Commission of 'em: The covetous Man hath the Allurement of Profit; the voluptuous Man hath the Bait of Pleasure; the ambitious Man the Temptation of Honour: but the idle profane Swearer serves the Devil for nought, and barter away his Soul without any consideration.

All that is alledg'd for it, is, That 'tis become a genteel and fashionable Practice; and to lard our Discourse now and then with an Oath, renders it the more full and blustering.

But are we not forbid to fashion ourselves according to the course of this World, or to follow the sinful and corrupt Practices of it? Will it be any Excuse at the last Day for taking God's Name in vain, to say it was the fashion to do so? Nay, will it not aggravate our Condemnation, to comply with those wicked Customs, which we should discountenance and condemn? Will any reckon it genteel to affront their Maker? or think their Language the more lofty and great, for being directed against Heaven? Is Profaneness to be thought an Ornament of Speech? or is the abusing of God's Name the way of advancing our own? Certainly they that think so, pervert the end of Speech, and make the Tongue, which is the *Glory of Man*, to prove his Shame and Ruin: For *God shall root out the Evil-doers, and the Tongue that speaketh proud things*. I have insisted the more on this vain and idle Swearing, not only because 'tis prohibited in this Precept, but because 'tis too much gotten into the Practice of some Men.

3. All using the Name of God in false Swearing is the *taking his Name in vain*. This is suppos'd to be the Sin principally prohibited in this Commandment, *viz.* the calling in of God to witness a Falshood: for the word here render'd *in vain*, in the Original signifies a *Lie*; and so 'tis us'd in that parallel place where this Law is repeated, *Ye shall not swear by my Name falsely*, Lev. 19. 12. And this is done either by affirming something which we know to be false, or by promising something which we mean not to perform. The former is call'd an *Affertory*, the latter a

Promissory Oath. In the first sense we take God's Name in vain, when we assert such or such a thing was done or said by such a Person, at such a time or place, and confirm it with an Oath, when we know of no such thing to be said or done by him; this is downright Perjury or Forswearing, and is too often found in Shops and Courts of Justice, where too many things are affirm'd to be true which they know to be false: which is a high Affront offer'd unto God, to father Falshood upon him, who is Truth in self, and to make God to vouch and attest the Lies and Suggestions of the Devil. Again,

If a Man swear to a thing of which he is only doubtful he is guilty of Perjury, tho the thing he swore to should afterward prove true: for such a one swears at random, and calls in God to witness a thing, which, for ought he knows, may be as well false as true: whereas an Oath is to be taken in Judgment, and we are never to swear to any thing which we do not certainly know. We make too bold with God Almighty, and *take his Name in vain*, when we bring him in as a Witness to a thing, of the Truth of which we are not fully assur'd.

Then for that other sort of Oaths wherein we promise something, Perjury may be committed, and the Name of God profan'd two ways:

1. When we promise a thing upon Oath, and at the time of Swearing have no purpose of performing it: this is both a mocking of God, and dealing deceitfully with Men; and is not only a dallying with, but a defying the Divine Majesty. *I have sworn* (saith David) *and am utterly purpos'd that my mouth shall not offend*: whereas these say in their Hearts, *I have sworn, and am fully purpos'd to falsify with God and Man*; which is a gross Abuse and Indignity offer'd to both. And therefore David makes it the Character of one that is to *ascend the holy Hill*, that he *hath not lift up his Heart unto Vanity, nor sworn to deceive his Neighbour*; Psal. 24. 4.

2. Perjury is committed, when tho at the time of promising we mean to perform, yet finding some Loss or Inconvenience after, we alter our mind, and refuse to do according to what is gone out of our mouth: this is to play with Oaths, and profane the Name of God. 'Tis the Character of a good Man, that he *sweareth to his Neighbour, and disappointeth him not, tho it prove to his own hindrance*; Psal. 15. 5. And we read, that when *Joshua and the Israe-*

lites

Ites had made a League, and sworn to the *Gibeonites*, tho' they were extorted by Craft, and prov'd to their great prejudice, yet they would not break their Oath, *Josh. 9*. The Name of God is too Sacred to be taken in vain; and where the matter of an Oath is lawful and possible, nothing can discharge or dispense with its Obligation. To do or think otherwise, is to dishonour God, to deceive our Neighbour, and to dissolve the Bond of human Society. But beside these, there is

Another way of *taking God's Name in vain*; and that is, by making rash Vows, and falsifying in good ones. A Vow being made unto God as the Party, is sacred and inviolable. We are bid to vow unto the Lord things worthy of him, and then to be careful of paying them: so that to vow to him in trivial matters, and to disregard him in greater, is to slight our Maker, and to take his Name in vain. In short then, all vain and rash Speeches, all idle Swearing, all Perjury or Forswearing, all Falshood or Rashness in Vows, are forbidden in this Commandment. To caution against which, here is added

A severe Commination, in those words, *For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain*. To hold any guiltless, is to free him from Blame and Punishment; and consequently not to hold him guiltless, is to free him from neither: yea, there is a *Meiosis* in the words, in which more is signify'd than seems to be express'd; and not to hold him guiltless, is to reckon him highly guilty, and worthy of the greatest Punishment. So that the Expression implies two things:

1. That God will surely punish all such as *take his Name in vain*.

2. That he will punish them with Rigor and Severity.

Now this Threatning is added to this Commandment, to awaken Men to a Sense of the Evil and Danger of breaking it: for tho' no Sin be more provoking to God than profaning his Name, yet none is more frequently committed, or less punish'd among Men. 'Tis usual for many who cannot bear the least Abuse offer'd to their own Name, patiently to hear the Name of God blasphem'd: yea, many times those that should punish this Sin in others, give the worst Examples of it themselves; larding their Discourses with Oaths and Curses, and shewing little or no Reverence for the great and terrible Name of God. For which reason, God Almighty declares here his different Sense and

Sentiments in this matter, letting us know that he will visit for these things himself, and will not hold them guiltless, whom we are apt to charge with little or no guilt at all.

Now that *the Lord will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain*, is evident from the many and sore Judgments executed on such as have been guilty of it. We read that the Son of the *Israelitish* Woman, who had curs'd and blasphem'd the Name of the Lord, was by God's command brought out of the Camp, and ston'd in the sight of all that heard him, *Lev. 24. 11, 12, 13.* *Pharaoh*, for his insolent saying, *Who is the Lord?* was plagu'd with sundry kinds of Judgments, and is set forth as a Monument of divine Justice. *Senacherib*, for blaspheming the Name of the living God, had his Army smote by an Angel, and was himself deliver'd up to his own Sons to be slain, *2 Kings 19. 35.* Many other Histories will inform us of the heavy Judgments that have befallen common Swearers and Profaners of God's holy Name.

Which should teach us to beware of all Irreverence towards the Sacred Name and Authority of God.

Thus we see what is forbidden in this Third Commandment; and likewise what great reason there is to avoid it.



DISCOURSE IX.

EXOD. XX. 7.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.

THIS Precept being negative, I treated in my last of what was forbidden by it; which was all irreverent and profane Use of the Sacred Name of God. But because every Negative includes and infers the Affirmative, I must proceed to the Affirmative part, or the Duties requir'd by it; and that is, in all cases, and upon all occasions, to use the Name of God reverently and becomingly. So that as the two first Commandments settled the Object

and Manner of Divine Worship, this secures the Honour and Reverence that is due to the Name of God.

By the Name of God (as was before observ'd) we understand all that by which he makes himself known to us ; and likewise all those things that more especially relate and appertain to him.

Of the first sort are his Titles, Attributes, Word and Works ; all which discovering God to us, and distinguishing him from all others, are in Scripture styl'd his Name.

Of the second sort are his Ministers, his Sabbath, his Sanctuary, and the like ; all which tending to make God known to us, are intitled to him, and call'd by his Name. All these are to be reverently us'd and honour'd by us, as bearing the Name of God, and being nearly related and devoted to him.

But how is this Name of God to be reverenc'd by us ? Why, not only by the inward Reverence and Esteem of the Mind, but likewise by the outward Reverence of our Words and Actions ; that is, as we are to entertain great and high Thoughts of him in our Hearts, so must all our Words and Speeches of him be reverent, and such as become his infinite Greatness. His Name is Great, Wonderful and Holy, and therefore must not be mention'd without the Honour and Respect due to it. 'Tis, we know, against good Manners, to mention the Name of a King, or any above us, without some token of Respect ; but the Name of God is above every Name, and therefore ought in reason to be had in the highest Estimation and Reverence. And this is to extend to all that is denominated by him, or belongs to him. As,

1. His Titles are to be us'd and spoken of with all Reverence ; *Holy and Reverend is his Name* (saith the Psalmist) and therefore to be us'd with all due and decent Regard. In *Deut. 28. 58.* we are commanded to *fear this glorious and fearful Name of the Lord our God.* We find God Almighty often declaring his Name, and mentioning his Titles, on purpose to strike our Minds with the greater Awe and Reverence of him. Hence the Jews had the Names of *Jah* and *Jehovah* in so high esteem and veneration, that they would scarce venture to pronounce them, for fear of profaning them : And shall we presume to use the sacred Names of *Lord* and *God* upon light and vain, not to say vile and sinful occasions ?

2. We

2. We are to think and speak honourably of the Attributes of God ; for these are in Scripture comprehended under his Name, and are therefore never to be mention'd without Honour. Of these some are peculiar to the Divine Nature, as Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and the like : Others are deriv'd down, and in some inferior degrees communicated to his Creatures, as Holiness, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness ; all which being Rays of the Divinity, and the essential Excellencies of the Supreme Being, are to be honourably esteem'd and mention'd by us.

3. We are to speak and think honourably of the Word of God. This is in Scripture often call'd by his Name ; *I have declar'd thy Name*, that is thy Word, *unto the Heathen*, John 17. 26. And the Psalmist tells us, that God hath *magnify'd his Word above all his Name*. Indeed, we cannot better shew our Reverence unto God, than by honouring his Word. He that truly honours any Person, will mightily regard what he says ; every word of one we value, will be of weight with us : and consequently if we bear that Reverence we ought unto God, we shall have a wonderful Respect for his Word ; we shall delight to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, relishing a Sweetness in it beyond that of *the Honey and the Honeycomb*, Psal. 19. 10. We shall not only speak of it with Respect, but make it the Guide of our Lives, and the Rule of all our Actions. How well this is observ'd by such as speak slightly of the Holy Scriptures, and make them too often the Subject of their Contempt and Drollery, some Men may do well to consider.

4. We are to speak and think honourably of the Works of God : these too bear his Name, and declare him to us : *The Heavens* (saith the Psalmist) *declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*. God Almighty distinguishes himself from the Heathen Gods, not only by his Word, in which he *shews things to come* ; but chiefly by his Works, in which his infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness manifestly appear. *The invisible things of God* (saith the Apostle) *from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, even his eternal Power and Godhead* ; for which reason he is, by way of Eminence, styl'd, *The living God, that made Heaven and Earth*. Now, his Works being Great, Wonderful, and Holy, are to be had in Reverence by us : we are highly to value and esteem them, and never to mention them without Honour : *The Works of the*

Lord

Lord are great (saith the Psalmist) sought out of all that have Pleasure therein. Accordingly we find him often magnifying and meditating upon his Works, and frequently extolling the Operations of his Hands; and in so doing, we are said to render unto him the Honour due to his Name.

But beside these distinguishing Titles and Attributes belonging to the Divine Majesty, there are other things dedicated to him, and thereby denominated by him, which for that reason require our Respect and Veneration; such are sacred Persons, Times, and Places, with some other things, which for the Relation they have to God, as bearing his Name, and belonging to him, are to be honour'd by us. As,

1. The Ministers of God are to be had in Honour and Reverence, being call'd by his Name, and constituted by his Authority: Hence the Apostle wills to mark them that are over us in the Lord, and admonish us, and to esteem them highly in Love both for their Work and their Master's sake; 1 Theff. 5. 13. In another place he wills us to account of them as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God; and for that reason, to be worthy of double Honour. The relation they bear to God, as his Ambassadors, calls for our Respect and Veneration; for Ambassadors, by the Laws of all Nations, are to be us'd with a Respect answerable to the Quality of him that sends them: and therefore our Saviour told his Apostles, that *they that despis'd them, despis'd him; and they that despis'd him, despis'd him that sent him*; Luke 10. 16. So that the contemning of Ministers, is the contemning of Christ and God too, and is a matter worthy the consideration of the Scoffers and Sectaries of our days.

2. The Lord's Day is to be reverenc'd and regarded by us, for the Title and Relation it has to him, for he hath set it apart for himself, and styl'd it his: *The seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*; and therefore he hath requir'd us to *sanctify the Sabbath*, which is call'd by his Name, and in which he hath willed us to call upon it. But this will fall more properly under the next Commandment, to which therefore I refer it.

3. The Lord's House, or the Place set apart for his Worship and Service, is to be honour'd and regarded for his sake: This is the Place where his Honour dwells, which he hath call'd by his own Name, and where he vouchsafes his

his more especial Presence; and therefore must be kept from common Uses, and be look'd upon and us'd as Holy unto the Lord. This he hath requir'd of us, *Ye shall reverence my Sanctuary*. Hence we find our Saviour whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, and saying, *My House is call'd the House of Prayer*; and elsewhere, *Make not my Father's House a House of Merchandise*; John 2. 16. signifying, that the Honour we owe to God requires us to reverence his House, which having his Name, and being devoted to his Service, ought to be esteem'd Holy, and to be set apart from all common Uses. This is fit to be consider'd by such as make no difference between a Church and a Stable, and many times prefer a Barn or Malt-house before the House of God.

But beside these, there are some Possessions which God Almighty hath more peculiarly call'd his, and that come under his Name, and they are Tithes and Offerings; which are so far to be regarded and esteem'd Sacred, as not to be withheld or alienated to common Uses. He who is the great Landlord and Proprietor of the World, hath reserv'd this part of our Substance as a high Rent and Acknowledgment to himself, which he hath made payable to his Ministers, who attend his Service and serve at his Altar; and to detain it from them, either in whole or in part, is the Sin of Sacrilege. Hence we find God Almighty declaring, that *we rob him by falsifying in Tithes and Offerings*, Mal. 3. 8. And if to rob Men be so great a Crime as to deserve Death, sure to rob God must carry a greater Guilt, and draw after it eternal Damnation; and therefore the sacrilegious Invaders of these Rights are, in the next Verse, said to be *cursed with a Curse*. What they thus impiously detain, proves a Curse and a Canker to the rest of their Substance; and where 'tis generally practis'd, brings Calamity and a Curse upon a whole Country. In short then, we are to honour the Name of God, by bearing a reverent regard to all things that appertain to him, or are denominated by him.

And this is to be express'd not only by our Words and Speeches, but chiefly by the whole Course of our Lives and Actions: there is a Language of our Works as well as Words; and as the Name of God is blasphem'd by our evil Deeds, so is it said to be glorify'd by our good Works. Now this Commandment ties up not only our Tongue from all profane and irreverent Speeches of God, or any thing

thing that belongs to him; but likewise our Hearts from thinking, and our Hands from acting any Evil: It wills us so to order our Words and Actions, that both may tend to and promote the Honour of God, that his Name may be glorify'd by us, never *taking it in vain*, by any rash, idle, or false Swearing. And when we use it to any good purpose, as in an Oath, by calling in God as a Witness; or in a Vow, by engaging to him as a Party; we take care that the Matter be such as may deserve it, and likewise make conscience duly to observe and perform it. Thus we see what is meant by the Name of God, what by honouring it, and how this may be best done.

It remains then, that we endeavour in all these ways to honour and glorify the Name of God; using all his Titles and Attributes with due Reverence and Regard; never mentioning the Name of God but upon weighty Matters and solemn Occasions; nor then, without an awful Fear and Sense of him upon our Mind. More particularly,

Let us learn from this Commandment to speak always reverently and becomingly of God's Word, and of all the Mysteries of Religion; not trifling or jesting with Divine and Sacred things, but making them the Subject of our most serious Thoughts and Meditations. *His Word (saith Moses) shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt always rehearse it with Fear and Reverence; Deut. 6. 5, 6, 7, &c.*

Next let us at all Times make honourable mention of the Works of God, both of Creation and Providence, which are in Scripture call'd by and comprehended under his Name. *Moses* often commanded the *Israelites* to *magnify and extol the Works of the Lord*, and to give him the Glory due to his Name. *David* frequently calls upon us to *praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the wonderful things he hath done for the Children of Men*: For himself he could not think of them without crying out, *O Lord how excellent is thy Name in all the World!*

Moreover, let us learn from hence to have a due Regard to those Persons, Times, and Places that are consecrated unto God, and call'd by his Name; honouring his Ministers, hallowing his Sabbath, and reverencing his Sanctuary.

Lastly, let us take heed of withholding or alienating that sacred part of our Substance, I mean the Tenth, which God Almighty hath reserv'd and appropriated to his Service. This he claims as his due, and hath consecrated to the use of the Altar, and cannot be detain'd or alienated without the

the Danger and Guilt of Sacrilege. We read what befell *Ananias* and *Sapphira* for withholding part of the Price of their consecrated Substance; both of them being smitten to Death by a sudden stroke from Heaven, *Acts* 5. 1, 2, &c. Neither will he hold them guiltless who rob him in Tithes and Offerings; which being made his by the Laws both of God and Man, to withhold them either in whole or in part, is neither to *render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's* nor unto God the things that are God's. To conclude,

Among other ways of honouring God, we are commanded to honour him with our Substance; which we cannot better do, than by being true to him in that part of it which he hath reserv'd for the Honour of his Name.

Thus having shew'd both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment; it remains, that in the whole course of our Lives we avoid the one, and observe the other.

DISCOURSE X.

EXOD. XX. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy: Six Days shalt thou Labour, and do all thy Work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, nor thy Cattle, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates; for in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh Day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.

THESE Words contain the Fourth and Last Commandment of the first Table, which more immediately concern the Duty we owe to God. The three foregoing Precepts direct to the Object and Manner of Divine Worship, together with the Honour due to the Name

Name of God, and all things relating to or compriz'd under it. This acquaints us with that portion of time which is to be set apart and devoted to his more solemn Service, which we are here told is the Seventh Day.

That some part of time is to be allotted to the Worship of our Maker, who is the Author and Giver of all time, is a moral Duty, dictated by the natural Reason of Mankind; but what part, or how much of our time is to be set apart for this purpose, depends upon the positive determination of the Divine Will. Now God Almighty in this Law has settled the proportion, and will'd us to devote the seventh part of our time to his Service; *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.*

This Commandment being partly Affirmative, and partly Negative, I shall consider first what is requir'd, and next what is forbidden in it; and likewise being partly Moral, and partly Positive, 'twill be requisite to distinguish and consider both. To which end we must observe in it,

First, A Precept, Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day. +

Secondly, An Encouragement to it, partly from the liberal Allowance granted for our own Business; Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do: and partly from the Propriety that God challenges in the seventh Day; But the seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. +

Thirdly, The manner of sanctifying and keeping Holy this Day: and that is, partly by resting from all bodily Labour, In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, &c. and partly by employing it in the holy Exercises of Religion: both which are inforc'd by the Example of God himself; For in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and rested on the seventh: and likewise from his own Dedication of this Day to holy Purposes; Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it. These are the several Parts or Branches of this Commandment, which must be therefore particularly handled. And, +

First, I must begin with the Precept, which is to keep holy the Sabbath-day: Where, by keeping holy we are not to understand any intrinsick or inherent Holiness, as if one Day were in it self more holy than another; but a relative Holiness, consisting in a Separation from common and ordinary, to divine and sacred Uses. For as some Places are said

said to be *Holy unto the Lord*, by being set apart and consecrated to his Service; so are some *Times* for the same reason styl'd *Holy*, by being apply'd and appropriated to holy Uses.

But why is there a *Memento* prefix'd to this above all the other Commandments? for whereas all the rest are deliver'd in plain Precepts, Thou shalt do or not do this or that; this is usher'd in with a *Memorandum* or Note of Attention, *Remember* that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day; and is likewise back'd with more Reasons and Inducements to its Observation than all the rest. Why, of this a double account may be given: As,

1. This might proceed from Mens proneness to forget, and backwardness to observe this Law, which might move the Almighty to add this *Memorandum* to keep it in remembrance. The World is so apt to insinuate, and take such firm hold of the Minds of Men, as to engross all their Time and Thoughts, and to drown the remembrance of divine things; and were it not for the return of this seventh Day, to call off their Minds from the Cares and Pleasures of this Life to attend higher and better things, they would fall into an utter forgetfulness of God, and drown themselves in Destruction and Perdition: To prevent which, this *Memento* was here given, *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy*. Moreover,

2. This was added, because Nature and Reason of itself not directing to any particular Day for publick Worship, 'twas but needful we should be call'd upon to remember and keep in mind the Day appointed by God himself for that purpose. 'Twas a Father's Observation, that the Sabbath is a Precept not made known to us by our own Consciences, as the other Precepts are; and therefore God gave Reasons and Remembrances for this, which were not needful for many others. Beside,

The Sabbath being a Memorial and Covenant between God and the Jews, to whom this Law was first given, it was requisite to prefix this Note of Attention, to keep them always mindful of it, and careful to observe it. But,

Secondly, What Reason or Encouragement is there for the observing of this Day? Why great, sundry ways: As,

1. From that liberal Allowance of time which God hath given us for our own Business, in those words; *Six days shalt thou*

thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do. He who is the Master of all Time, hath given us a liberal share, and reserv'd to himself a very scanty proportion, but one day in seven; and Gratitude, as well as Equity, should make us willingly return him that. Had he taken all or the greatest part of our time to himself, he had done us no wrong; yea, it had been kindness still to allow any: for being all his, he might do with his own what he pleases, and none may say, *What dost thou?* Whereas he has given us the largest share of what was all his, and allow'd us six times more than he takes to himself. Sure none can complain of God as a hard Master, who exacts no unreasonable Tasks from us, but only wills us to do our own Business: nor does he abridge us in time, but affords six days in seven for the dispatch of it; and it must be very ungrateful, as well as unjust, to deny him that: especially considering,

2. The peculiar Right and Property which God Almighty challenges in this Day; *But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.* Indeed, every Day may be said to be his, he being the Author of all Time, and the number and measure of our Days being all in his hand; but he lays a more particular Claim to the seventh part of it, which he hath set apart and reserv'd for his Service. He hath given us the disposal of all the rest, to be employ'd as we think fit on all lawful and necessary occasions: *but the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;* this he hath consecrated to his own Lot, and set apart for himself. But,

Thirdly, How is this Day to be kept holy unto the Lord? Why, chiefly these two ways.

1. By resting in it from all bodily Labours. And,
2. By spending it in holy and religious Exercises.

1. I say, the Commandment requires it to be kept as a Day of Rest, and that not barely from the Works of Sin, which we are to abstain from every day; but likewise from the common and ordinary Works of our Calling, which may be well enough done at other times: *In it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, &c.* that is, they were to rest from all bodily Labour of any kind, the better to attend the Service of their Maker. And this Rest was to extend not only to Parents and Masters of Families, but to all their Children and Servants both Male and Female; yea, to the very Cattle and Beasts of the Field, who were to partake of this Rest, and to find Ease and Relief on that day

day from all painful Drudgeries: beside which, it was reach to the Stranger within their Gates, that is, to those of another Country or Religion, that were admitted within the Gates of their House, or resided in their Families, who were likewise to receive the Benefit of this Rest, and to be exempted from all kind of Labour.

Now this Rest was made so strict to the Jews, that they were to abstain not only from all hard Labour, but from all the ordinary Work and Business of a Family: for they were forbidden to kindle a Fire, or dress their ordinary Provision on that day: for so we read, *Exod. 35. 2, 3.* where *Moses* commands *the Sabbath to be kept as a Day of Rest unto the Lord, and whosoever doth any Work therein, even to the kindling a Fire in their Habitations, should be put to Death.* Yea, they were so far to rest from bodily Labour, that they were not to move from their own place: *Exod. 16. 29.* *Abide ye every Man in his own place, let no Man go out of his place on the seventh day.* Not that they were restrained from the solemn Assemblies, where the Law was read and expounded to them, but from all unnecessary Walks and Journies, and likewise from going abroad to seek Provisions: for they were forbidden to gather *Manna* on that day, as we read, *ver. 27, 28.* and we find one for gathering Sticks on the Sabbath-day put to death by God's own Order. *Numb. 15. 32, 33, 35.* In short, they were restrain'd not only from all servile Work, but from doing their own Pleasure, thinking their own Thoughts, or speaking their own Words; *Isa. 58. 1.*

But our blessed Saviour, who added to the Strictness of some other Laws, hath relax'd the Severity of this: Being Lord of the Sabbath, he made a double Alteration in it; the one respecting the Time, the other the Manner of keeping it. The Jewish Sabbath, which was on the Last Day of the Week, and kept in memory of the Creation, is now chang'd to the First, in memory of Christ's Resurrection, styl'd therefore the *Lord's Day*. Again, the Jewish Sabbath is by the Apostle styl'd, *A shadow of things to come, but the Body is Christ*, *Col. 2. 16, 17.* That strict Rest enjoin'd in it under the Law, represented a more spiritual Rest from Sin under the Gospel, and likewise that eternal Rest that remains for the People of God: Both which being completed in Christ, who is the end of the Law for Righteousness, the former Shadows vanish'd and yielded to him as the Substance. Hence we find him allowing of many Works

of Mercy and Charity on that day, which the Rigor of the Law would not dispense with. When the *Pharisees* and others blam'd the Disciples for *plucking a few Ears of Corn, and healing the Sick on the Sabbath-day*; our Saviour tells them, that *the Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath*; and that it *was lawful to heal and do all good Offices on that day*, both to Man and Beast.

But still we are to make the Lord's Day a Day of Rest, and to forbear all the Work and Business of our Calling: not that these things are evil, but good in themselves; nor is this Cessation from Labour acceptable in itself, or any part of Divine Worship: but because earthly Employments are a distraction and hindrance to the more heavenly Duties of that Day, God Almighty hath will'd us to abstain from them, and hath taken us off from our own Work on that day, that we may the better attend on his.

2. We are to keep this Day holy, by devoting it to pious and religious Exercises, and by performing on it all the Acts of Piety and Devotion; for tho we are permitted and requir'd to rest from our Labours on this Day, yet we are not to make it a Day of Idleness and Looseness, but to imploy it in the religious Acts of Hearing, Praying, Reading of God's Word, and Receiving the Holy Sacraments. This we find was the Practice of the first Christians, who *continued stedfast on that day in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers*, Acts 2. 42. And we read of St. John's being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Rev. 1. 10. meaning, that he was wholly imploy'd in the spiritual Exercises of Devotion and Piety; which things are to be done, not only publicly in the Congregation, but privately in the Family, and secretly in the Closet; this Day being to be set apart for Holy Uses.

Moreover, we are to employ some part of this time in pious and heavenly Meditation, particularly on the wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption. We are to sanctify this Day by Acts of Mercy and Charity, such as relieving the Poor, visiting the Sick, and the like; which as they are never unseasonable, so are they more especially the proper Work of this Day. Hence we find in the Primitive Times, the Collections for the Saints were generally on this Day; the Apostle exhorting, *On the first Day of the Week let every one lay by him in store, as God has prosper'd him*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. And both our Saviour's Command and Example have warranted and recommended

the doing all the Good we can on that Day both to Man and Beast.

Briefly then, the Moral Part of this Commandment requires some Portion of Time to be dedicated to the Service of our Maker, the Author and Bestower of all.

The Positive Part of it hath assign'd the seventh Part, and requires that Proportion of Time to be set apart for this purpose; which Time is to be kept holy, by resting on it from all our worldly Business, and employing it on the more weighty Affairs of Heaven and Happiness.

To the doing hereof, is added a double Inforcement; one taken from the Example of God Almighty, who wrought six Days, and rested the seventh; *For in six Days, &c.* the other from the Divine Designation and Dedication of it to holy Purposes; *Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.* Of each of which a word. And,

First, God Almighty presses the Observation of this Law from his own Example; *For in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh Day.* He could as well have made all those things in six Minutes, yea in one single Moment, as in six Days; but he took this time for effecting of it, to teach us Diligence and Deliberation in all our Affairs: and then *rested the seventh Day*; not that he was weary with working, or needed any Rest to refresh him, but merely to give us an Example of ceasing on that Day from our worldly, and minding more heavenly Affairs. Now since God himself hath condescended so low, as to work six Days and rest the seventh, merely to give us an Example and Encouragement to do the same; what better Direction, or nobler Pattern can we wish to follow in this matter? especially considering,

Next, that God Almighty has particularly appointed and consecrated this Portion of Time to his Service: *Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh Day, and hallowed it.* He blessed it by his own Example, resting that Day from all his Works; and *hallowed it* by his Command, requiring it to be kept Holy: not that God's blessing of it has infus'd any inherent Holiness into it above other Days, for both Times and Places are incapable of any such real Holiness; but that he hath consecrated it for holy Uses, and set it apart for the Honour and Worship of himself; for so the hallowing and sanctifying of these things is in Scripture wont to signify. Beside, God is said to bless this Day, by making it the

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Disc. 10. *The Fourth Commandment.*

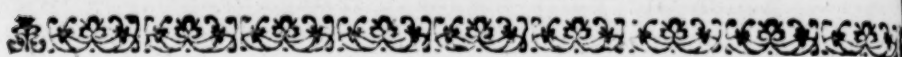
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Time in which he hath promis'd more especially to meet and bless us: for tho God be at all times and every where present with his People, yet he is more peculiarly and graciously present with them on this Day, and in the Places dedicated to his Service, than at other Times and Places; then and there he delights to meet them, and more liberally to dispense his Grace and Blessings to them: to which end, he wills us, to observe his Day, and to frequent his House.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment, namely, to sanctify One Day in Seven, and keep it holy unto the Lord, by sequestering ourselves from all secular Affairs, and imploying it in all the solemn Acts of Piety and Religion. This common Reason and Equity may challenge from us, to give him back so small a Portion of our Time, who gives us all, and to render him this slender Tribute and Acknowledgment for all his Mercies.

To close up all, let us learn hence carefully and conscientiously to observe this Day as Holy unto the Lord, abstaining on it from all ordinary and worldly Business, and devoting it wholly to the Service of our Maker: Let us diligently attend the publick, private, and secret Devotion, together with all other Acts of Mercy and Charity, that are proper to the Occasion and Solemnity of this Day, making it the Market-day for our Souls, as the rest of the Week is for our Bodies; being as intent then on the great Affairs of the next World, as we are at other times on the lesser Concerns of this: not saying with those in *Amos*, *When will the Sabbath be over that we may sell Corn, and the New-Moon that we may set forth Wheat?* *Amos* 8. 5. but saying with *David*, *This is the Day which the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it: I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord: I will praise the Lord in the Congregation; in the presence of all his People, will I sing praises unto him.* This is to begin the Work of Heaven here on Earth, to lay up our Treasure there, to be ready when we come to make use of it. And by thus keeping a Sabbath holy unto God now, we shall ere long celebrate an Everlasting Sabbath with him in Glory.





DISCOURSE XI.

EXOD. XX. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day: six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do, but the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, nor thy Maid-servant, thy Cattle, nor the Stranger that is within thy Gates: for in six Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh Day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh Day and hallowed it.

I Treated in my last of the Affirmative part of this Precept, which requires the keeping the Sabbath, or Lord's Day, holy unto the Lord: I proceed now to the Negative part of it, which forbids all Profanation of this Day; for when we are strictly charg'd to remember this Day to keep it Holy, it manifestly condemns all unhallowing or profaning of it. But here, because there are two Extremes, some pressing too much strictness, and others allowing too great a looseness in this point: great care must be taken to avoid the Superstition of the one, and the Profaneness of the other. To which end, I must enquire

First, What it is to profane the Lord's Day? and when we may be said to do so? And,

Secondly, I must shew the Sinfulness and Danger of doing it.

First then, What is it to profane the Sabbath, or Lord's Day? and when may we be said to do so? In answer to which, I say in the general, that this is done, partly by neglecting what is requir'd, and partly by doing what is forbidden on that Day. For the better understanding of both, I say,

1. That

I. That to neglect the Worship of God in publick or private on those Times, is to profane the Lord's Day: For the honouring and serving God, being the proper Work of that Day, for which it was set apart; to neglect that, is to unhallow and profane it. Now that the worshipping of God, especially in publick, is the proper Work of this Day, is evident from the Precepts of the Old and New Testament, and likewise from the Practice of all good Men under both. The Jews were commanded to keep their Sabbath by resorting to the Temple and the Synagogues, where the Law and the Prophets were read and expounded every Sabbath-day; as we read, *Acts* 13. 27. And we find our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles frequenting those Places, and joining with them on that Day in the publick Acts of Prayer, and praising God; *Luke* 4. 16. & 24. 53.

After his Resurrection, which occasion'd the Change of the Sabbath from the last to the first Day of the Week, we find the Disciples meeting and joining together on that Day in all the Acts and Parts of publick Worship, *Acts* 2. 42. which Practice hath been deriv'd down and continu'd in the Christian Church ever since. Now to forsake these publick Assemblies, and to neglect the solemn Worship of God perform'd in them at those times, is to profane the Lord's Day: Hence we find the Criticks deriving the Latin word *profanum*, from *procul a fano*, which is keeping off from the Temple; it being an Argument of an evil and profligate Mind, without any just occasion to absent themselves from the Ordinances of Christ, and to withdraw from the solemn Worship of their Maker.

Neither will it suffice to say as some profane Wretches do, that they can pray, read, and serve God at home, and spend their time as well in the Closet as in the Church.

For, beside that the Apostle hath given a strict Charge to Christians, *not to forsake the Assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is*; our Blessed Saviour has promis'd a greater Blessing to those that meet together in God's House, than he has to those who abide at home in their own. Moreover, they who urge this, commonly use it as a Cloke or Colour for their Profaneness: for instead of the Private Exercises of Religion they pretend to, they too often spend the Day, either in indulging the Pleasures, or immersing themselves in the Cares of this Life. Nor is it a just Excuse for neglecting the publick Worship of God in the Church, that they perform these Duties in the

private Meetings and Conventicles of Sectaries.

For these are the Nurseries of Discord and Division, that destroy the Harmony and Reverence of Divine Worship, and naturally break that Order, Unity, and Charity that is to be maintain'd among Christians: for which reason, our Blessed Saviour has willed Christians to *agree in their Petitions, to speak the same things, and with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God*; which cannot be, without joining together in a publick, uniform, and regular way of Worship: to which, the Peace and Unity of the Church, as well as the Duty we owe to them that rule over us in the Lord, indispensably oblige us.

2. To neglect the private as well as publick Offices of Devotion, is to profane the Lord's Day; for we must not think the Sabbath over, when the solemn Assemblies are ended: there remain other Offices of Piety and Devotion to be done at home, as Praying, Reading, Conference and Meditation, which are not to be omitted on that Day. Every House should be in some sense a Temple dedicated unto God, where the daily Sacrifices of Prayer and Praises are to be offer'd to him; and every Master of a Family should be in some sense a Priest, to instruct his Children and Servants, and to bless and pray for all that are committed to his Charge: This we find commended in *Abraham the Father of the Faithful*, who taught *his Children the Way of the Lord*, and thereby deriv'd a Blessing to his Posterity; the neglect whereof we find condemn'd by the Prophet, who denounces a Curse on them *that forget God, and the Families that call not upon his Name*.

But beside these, there are Seasons of secret Devotion, in which our Saviour has willed us to *enter our Closet, and shut the Door*; and to *pray to our Father who seeth in secret, and by so doing, he will reward us openly*; Mat. 6. 6. Thus is publick, private and secret Prayer, the great Work and Business of this Day; by observing whereof, we keep it holy, and by neglecting of them, we defecrate and profane it.

But there is, secondly, another way of profaning this Day; and that is, not only by neglecting what is requir'd, but by doing what is forbidden on it. As,

1. To do any thing that is sinful on the Lord's Day, is a manifest Profanation of it: for all Sin is directly contrary to the Holiness of God, and the Sacred Offices we are then to perform to him; and therefore to commit it at those times,

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times, must certainly be an Abomination to him. Indeed, Sin and Wickedness being the Works of the Devil, are every day to be abstain'd from, but more especially on the Lord's Day, which is devoted only to Holy Purposes: and to commit them then, aggravates and doubles the Impiety.

2. To do the common and ordinary Works of our Callings, or to exact the Labours of our Servants, or the Drudgeries of our Cattle on the Lord's Day, is a plain violation of this Commandment; for the Rest here enjoin'd, requires an Abstinence from all manner of Work, and that not only in our own Persons, but extends likewise to all our Dependents, that our Children, Servants and Cattle, may rest as well as we. Not that we are debar'd from the necessary Actions and innocent Refreshments of human Life: for our Saviour hath plainly declar'd Works of Necessity and Mercy lawful to be done on that Day, both to Man and Beast: but that we sequester ourselves from all worldly Business, the better to attend the Service of God, and that we allow our Children and Servants competent Rest, Time, and Leisure to do the same. So that to labour ourselves on that Day, or to require those committed to our Charge to do so, is to pollute the Sabbath, or profane the Lord's Day.

But was not the keeping of the Sabbath, *a Sign and Covenant peculiar to the Jews only?* as we read *Exod. 31. 16.* and *Ezek. 20. 11, 12, 20.* Does not the Apostle forbid Christians to *judge one another upon the account of a Festival, New Moon, or Sabbath?* *Col. 2. 16.* Yea, does he not reckon it a Mark of Judaism, to *observe Days, and Months, and Years?* *Gal. 4. 10.* which Words, as appears by the Context, relate to the Observation of Festivals and Sabbaths: And how then can we urge these things on the Practice of Christians under the Gospel?

In answer hereunto, the Jewish Sabbaths indeed, as to the Time, Occasion, and Manner of observing them, had something peculiar only to the Jews; in which Sense they were ritual, and *shadows of good things to come*, which are therefore done away, and may not now be urg'd on the Practice of Christians: for as Circumcision, so the keeping of the Sabbath, was ordain'd to be a Sign and Covenant between God and the People of the Jews, to discern their peculiar Relation to him, and distinguish them from all other People. But the Moral Part of this Law, which requires

quires the allotting some Portion of our Time to the Service of our Maker, belongs to all Men, and is of perpetual and indispensable Obligation. As for the Measure and Proportion of Time to be set apart for this Purpose, God himself having assign'd the seventh Part, and both the Practice and Authority of the Church having directed to and confirm'd the same, it becomes our Duty to own it, and our Sin to neglect or profane it. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the Sinfulness and Danger of this Profaneness: and both these will be evident, by considering,

1. That the unhallowing the Sabbath or Lord's Day, betrays a very great Slight and Contempt of our Maker. He that truly loves or honours any Person, will be desirous to meet and converse with him, he will delight in his Company, and embrace all Opportunities of enjoying it; whereas the declining these things is an Argument not only of Coldness, but Contempt. The only way we have of enjoying God here, is in his Ordinances, in which he hath promis'd to meet and to bless us; so that to turn our Backs upon these, is in effect to renounce all Commerce or Communion with him, and to say with them in *Job*, *Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways*. God Almighty, to withdraw us from the World, and to preserve the Remembrance of himself among us, hath appointed one Day in seven to be employ'd in his Service and dedicated to his Honour, leaving a strict Charge, that whatever else we forget, we should *remember to keep this Day holy*. Now to profane this Day by neglecting his Service, and putting it to other common Uses, is to cast off the Love, Fear and Remembrance of him; which is the greatest Slight and Indignity that can be offer'd to him.

2. The profaning the Lord's Day, is not only a high Indignity, but a great piece of Injustice to our Maker; for he who is the Lord of all Time, having reserv'd and consecrated this Portion of it to himself, it must be not only sinful, but sacrilegious to rob him of it. Common Justice requires to render to all their Dues; and if we cannot without great Injustice defraud our Brother, much less may we rob God, who is the Author and Giver of all we have. Moreover,

3. To profane the Lord's Day, is an Act of great Ingratitude; for God Almighty having given us so liberal a Portion

Portion of Time for our own Affairs, and taken so small a Part of it to be employ'd in his Service : that is, having given us six Days in the Week, and reserv'd but one for himself, it must be monstrous Ingratitude to deny him that, and to misemploy that Time upon our Lusts, which he hath set apart for the Celebration of his own Honour. Had it been propounded to us to allow the Proportion of Time for God's Service, could we in reason assign a less than himself hath done? He hath given us the odds of six to one, and sure we cannot without Shame and Blushing withhold that from him : which is sufficient to convince us of the great Guilt of violating this Law by profaning the Lord's Day.

Neither is the Danger less than the Evil of this Practice ; for this Sin has frequently inkindled the Wrath of God, and drawn down the doleful Effects of his Displeasure. We read under the Old Law, how God commanded the Breakers of the Sabbath to be cut off, and punish'd the Violation of this Commandment with a signal and swift Destruction. The Man that gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath-Day, was order'd by God himself to be put to death : *The Congregation gathering together, ston'd him with Stones till he died* ; Numb. 15. 35, 36. And as the Lord promised to reward the Observation of the Sabbath with all sorts of Blessings, so he threatens to punish the Contempt of it with the sorest Evils : Jer. 17. 24, 25, &c. *If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no Burden thro' the Gates on the Sabbath-day, but hallow the Sabbath day to do no Work therein ; then shall there enter into this City, Kings and Princes sitting on the Throne of David, and the City shall remain for ever : But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle a Fire in the Gates thereof, and it shall devour the Palaces of Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched.*

Neither is God less solicitous about the Observation of the Lord's Day under the Gospel, than he was of the Jewish Sabbath under the Law ; and they that profane the one, shall fare no better than they that polluted the other : For as great, if not a greater Portion of Time is to be devoted to God under the Gospel, than was requir'd of the Jews under the Law ; since the great Mercy, upon which their Sabbath was founded, is common to us, and our Obligations since are become much greater. For if the Creation of the World, and God's Rest from it, were a just
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Motive to consecrate that Day as Holy to the Lord on which he rested, sure the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, on which all our Hopes depend, may justly exact the same Tribute, and consecrate the Day on which he rose : and consequently to neglect or profane that Day so devoted to him, is at once to provoke God, and affront our Saviour.

Thus we see what is requir'd in this Commandment; namely, to keep one Day in seven Holy unto the Lord, by resting on it from all worldly and bodily Labour, and devoting it to the publick and private Exercises of Piety and Religion : to which we are encourag'd by the Example of God himself, whom to imitate is our greatest Glory and Happiness; and likewise by his solemn Dedication of this Day to these Purposes. Moreover,

We see also what is forbidden in this Law; namely, the Abuse and Profanation of this Day, either by neglecting the sacred Offices of Religion, or prostituting it to sinful and secular Purposes.

It remains then that we *remember the Sabbath or Lord's Day to keep it Holy*, in the way and manner describ'd; and as carefully avoid all Neglect and Profanation of it : that so *resting from our Labours* on this Day, we may shortly rest from all our Labours, and be receiv'd into that everlasting Rest which remains for the People of God.



DISCOURSE XII.

EXOD. XX. 12.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

HAVING finish'd the four Commandments of the First Table, which more immediately respect our Duty to God;

I proceed to those of the Second Table, which more particularly relate to our Duty to Man. The

First

First whereof is contain'd in these Words, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.* where we have a Precept, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; and a Promise annex'd to it, *That thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: call'd therefore *the first Commandment with Promise*. In handling these Words, I must begin with the Precept; and therein enquire,

First, Whom we are to understand here by *Father and Mother*? And,

Secondly, What is the Honour we are requir'd to give them? For the

First, By Father and Mother here we are to understand,

1st, Our Natural Parents that begat us, not excluding our Grandfathers and Grandmothers that begat them, and from whom we mediately derive our Being: these are call'd *Fathers of the Flesh*, and both in Scripture and common Use are generally styl'd Fathers and Mothers.

2^{dly}, Kings and Queens are in Scripture Dialect frequently so styl'd; and all that are in any Temporal Authority over us are often call'd by the Name of Fathers, because they succeed in that Power and Authority, which Fathers originally had over those that descended from them. Thus *Adam*, *Noah*, and the rest of the Patriarchs, were both Fathers and Kings to all their Posterity; having the Power of Life and Death, and in all things ruling and reigning over them. The Kings of the *Philistines* were generally styl'd *Abimelech*, which signifies *the King my Father*, as we read *Gen. 20.* and Princes are still call'd *Patres Patriæ*, Fathers of their Country. The Prophet *Isaiah* styles Kings nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers, from that tender Care they have, or should have, in fostering and defending the Church.

3^{dly}, By Father and Mother here we understand likewise our spiritual Fathers, that begat us again unto God; such are the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, by whose Blessing and Instructions *we are born again to a lively Hope*: hence *St. Paul* declares himself a Father to the *Corinthians*, because he had begotten them again unto Christ thro' the Gospel, *1 Cor. 4. 15.* and elsewhere he calls the *Galatians* his Children, for the same reason. In the Old Testament, *Joseph* is said to be a *Father unto Pharaoh*, *Gen. 45. 8.* And *Elisha* calls the Prophet *Elijah* his Father, *2 Kings 1. 12.*

And

And we know the Name of Fathers is continu'd to the Bishops and Pastors of the Church to this Day.

4thly, The Masters and Mistresses of Families, are in Scripture sometimes styl'd Fathers and Mothers; and that not only with respect to their Children, but likewise to their Servants, of whom they have the Care and Oversight. Hence the Master is styl'd *Pater-Familias*, the Father of the Family; and *Naaman the Syrian* is call'd a Father by his Servants, 2 Kings 5. 13.

Lastly, All Superiors in Age, Wisdom, and Knowledge, are here compriz'd under the Titles of Father and Mother: thus the Antients are styl'd Fathers, and we are bid to rise up and reverence the grey Hairs of venerable Antiquity. The Senators of *Rome* were call'd *Patres Conscripti*, and the younger were requir'd to reverence them: all that excel'd in the Knowledge of any Art or Science, or taught them to others, were call'd Fathers. Thus *Jabal* is said to be the Father of all that dwell in Tents, and *Jubal* the Father of all that handle the Harp or Organ, Gen. 4. 20, 21. because they first invented and instructed others in the Use and Knowledge of them. And St. Paul advises *Timothy* to intreat the Elder Men as Fathers, and the Elder Women as Mothers, 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2.

In short then, all Parents both Natural and Civil, all that are any way above us in Place, Parts, Power, Age, or Office, are here comprehended under the Style of Fathers and Mothers. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the Honour here requir'd to be paid to them: And this in general imports all that decent and becoming Behaviour which is to be shewn to all that are in any of those foremention'd ways above us; for this Commandment being an Abstract of our Duty to Superiors, the Honour here enjoin'd must comprize the whole of our Duty towards them. And this may be reduc'd to these two Heads:

(1.) An honourable and befitting Esteem of them in our Mind. And,

(2.) A decent Demeanour towards them with our Body: the one is the inward, the other the outward Honour, that is to be given to them.

(1.) To honour Father and Mother, is to think honourably and worthily of all our Superiors; for so the word Honour in the Original signifies, not to account lightly of a thing,

thing, but to esteem it of weight and moment. To esteem lightly of a Person, is to despise him; and to set a Value upon another, is to honour him: accordingly we are here commanded to have our Superiors in great account, to set a due price and value upon them, and to have them in veneration. And indeed the Excellency stamp'd upon them, by which God hath made them our Superiors, may challenge this from us, to look upon them as rais'd above the common Level, to be vested with some Authority over us, and to be regarded accordingly. Now this inward Honour includes Love, Fear, and other Affections of the Mind, according to the different Nature, Quality, and Degrees of Superiority they may have over us. Beside which, we are,

(2.) To express this inward Honour of the Mind by the outward Reverence of the Body; rising up to our Superiors, as *Solomon* did to his Mother *Bathsheba*, uncovering the Head, and bowing the Body to them; speaking honourably of them upon all Occasions, giving them the Cap and the Knee, and all other outward Tokens and Signs of Honour. This is in general the Honour here commanded, and is due to all our Superiors.

More particularly, Children are to honour their Natural Parents;

1. By loving them with a sincere and intire Affection, as those from whom they receiv'd their Being.

2. By fearing and reverencing of them; for so it is requir'd, *Levit. 9. 3. Ye shall fear every Man his Father and Mother.*

3. By obeying of them and hearkning to their Counsel and Instructions: so the Apostle direct, *Children obey your Parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto God;* *Col. 3. 20.*

4. By rendring them all Gratitude and Retribution: *Let Children shew all Piety at home, and requite their Parents, for this is good and acceptable before God;* *1 Tim. 5. 4.* Considering the tender Care of Parents in their Breeding, Maintenance, and Education, before they could help themselves, they stand oblig'd to relieve, succour, and support them under all their Wants and Weakness; this Nature itself prompts us to, and all civil Nations have ever own'd and practis'd it.

Again, we are to honour our Civil Parents and Governors;

I. By

1. By reverencing their Persons, looking upon them as God's Anointed, and behaving ourselves towards them as Persons vested with his Authority.

2. By obeying their Laws, made for the Preservation of Order and the publick Good: for so we are bid to *obey them that have the Rule over us*, and to *submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake*.

3. By paying Tribute, and entertaining a grateful Sense of the many Blessings and Privileges we enjoy by their Protection, the better to ease and assist them under the Burden of their weighty Cares and Troubles.

4. By praying for them, and calling in the Aid and Assistance of Heaven for their Welfare and Direction in all their Affairs, *that under them we may live quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty*. All this, Reason and Religion, as well as the common Safety, strongly oblige us to.

Moreover, we are to honour our Spiritual Fathers and Pastors;

1. By reverencing them *as the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the manifold Grace of God: Know them that labour among you in the Word and Doctrine* (saith the Apostle) *and esteem them highly for their Work sake*, 1 Thess. 5. 13. *For they watch for your Souls, as those that must give an Account: and therefore he would have them accounted worthy of double Honour, and to be treated as the Ambassadors of Christ*.

2. By receiving their Doctrine; being, while they keep to their Rule, *the Word of God, and not of Man*: for which reason our Saviour himself declares, *He that beareth you, beareth me; and he that despises you, despises me*.

3. By affording them Maintenance, and particularly that which God himself, as well as the Laws of the Country, have allotted to them, the Tithes and Offerings; which whoever withholds in whole or in part, is a Robber of God, and guilty of vile and notorious Sacrilege.

4. By praying for them, that they may have those Assistances of God's Holy Spirit, as are necessary for the Discharge of their Holy Calling; that both Ministers may keep to sound Doctrine, and the People hear and receive it as the Oracles of God. All this, the Duty we owe to God and our own Souls, do evidently exact from us.

Furthermore, Servants are to honour their Masters and Fathers of Families;

1. By

1. By obeying all their lawful Commands, for so the Apostle's Charge is, *Servants obey your Masters in all things*, Eph. 6. 6. and that not with grudging or answering again, but with a ready and willing Mind, as *doing Service to the Lord, and not unto Men.*

2. By shewing all Fidelity in what is intrusted to them, not embezzling or purloining their Master's Goods, but to be true to their Trust, and faithfully manage and account for what is committed to them; that they may receive the Reward of good and faithful Servants, and be admitted into their Master's Joy.

3. By shewing all Diligence in the Work and Business that is set them, *not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but with Singleness of Heart, doing it as to the Lord.*

4. By shewing all Meekness and Patience, *not answering again*, but receiving all just Rebukes, and amending upon them.

This, Christianity hath made due from all Servants to their Masters; and that not only to the Good and Gentle, but likewise to the Froward, as we are told in 1 Pet. 2. 20.

Lastly, We are to honour our Fathers in Age, Dignity, or any other Gifts and Endowments of the Mind:

1. By rendering them all due Respect and Reverence. This is due to the Wisdom and Experience of aged Men: *A hoary Head (saith Solomon) is a Crown of Glory, if found in the way of Righteousness*; and therefore we are bid to rise up before the hoary Head, and honour the Face of an old Man, Lev. 19. 32.

2. By lending an ear to their Counsel and Instruction; for Youth is oftentimes rash and heady, too apt to be misled and overcome with every Temptation, and therefore stands in frequent need of the Advice of the Wise and Aged; for which reason we are bid to ask Counsel of the Antients, for *Days will speak, and Multitude of Years teach Wisdom.*

3. By submitting to their grave and just Reproofs, which are sometimes necessary to awaken and reclaim us, and therefore should be receiv'd with Meekness and Gratitude: *Let the Righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me (saith holy David) and it shall be a precious Balm, that shall not break my Head.*

4. By blessing God for the Gifts and Graces confer'd upon them, endeavouring to improve by them in Virtue and Knowledge, and learning from their Instructions and Example.

These are the Duties of Inferiors towards their Superiors. But because the reciprocal Duties of Superiors to their Inferiors are likewise here imply'd and commanded in this Precept, 'twill be requisite to mention some of the chief of them. And,

1. Natural Parents are to love, educate, and provide for their Children, bringing them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord, thereby providing for the Happiness and Salvation of their Souls. Moreover, they are to breed them up in some honest Calling or Course of Life, for the Sustainance of their Bodies; that they may not only be arm'd against their own, but able to relieve the Necessities of others. They are to begin with their Children betimes, instilling good Principles into them, and setting before them a good Example; but above all they are to pray for them, to give them their Blessing, and to recommend them to the Grace and Blessing of their Father in Heaven.

2. Civil Parents, that is, Princes and Governors, are to protect the Persons and Rights of their Subjects, ruling over them with Justice, Clemency, and Moderation; knowing that they are *God's Ministers to them for good, attending continually on this very thing; not bearing the Sword in vain, but using it to the Terror of Evil-doers, and the Defense of them that do well*: more especially, *Kings are to be nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers to the Church*, preserving it in that Fulness of Power and Authority with which Christ hath invested it.

3. Spiritual Fathers and Pastors are to teach and instruct the People committed to their Charge, feeding their respective Flocks with sound Doctrine, and going before them in a pious Example; ruling over them with Diligence and Fidelity, and like good Stewards of the Mysteries of God, dispensing to every one their Meat in due Season.

4. Masters and Fathers of Families are to rule their House well, governing their Children and Servants with Meekness and Discretion, not *provoking them to Wrath, or being bitter against them*, but gentle and easy to be intreated; providing things honest in the sight of all Men; encouraging the Good, and correcting the Bad; in all things shewing themselves the Servants of God, knowing that they themselves have a Master in Heaven.

Lastly, Fathers in Age, Experience, or any Endowments of Mind, are to be Patterns of Gravity, Wisdom, and Sobriety to the younger sort, advising and directing them

them in case of Doubts, wisely rebuking their Rashness and Folly, and guiding them in the Ways of Virtue by their Counsel and Example.

Thus we see the Sense of this Precept, of *honouring our Father and Mother*, which is an excellent Rule to direct Inferiors in all their Duty to their respective Superiors. To which is added,

2dly, A Promise to encourage and enforce the Practice of it; *That thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* The Blessing here promis'd is a long and happy Life, and that to be spent in the Land of *Canaan*, the great Mercy promis'd to the *Israelites*, and that to which all their Hopes and Desires tended: so that the Promise, in its literal Sense, seems peculiar only to Jews, as referring to the Land of *Canaan*, which was alone promis'd and given unto them. Indeed the Jews being a Carnal People, and wholly affected with terrene and worldly Objects, were allur'd to their Duty chiefly, if not only, by temporal Promises; Length of Days, and earthly Prosperity, especially in the promis'd Land, were the great Motives to Obedience. Hence God Almighty presses this Commandment with a Promise to bless dutiful Children with long Life in the comfortable Possession of that good Land; and we find *Solomon* pressing Wisdom upon the like Inducements, because *Length of Days was in her right Hand, and in her left Riches and Honour.*

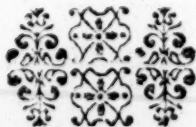
But tho the literal Sense of this Promise concern'd the Jews only, to whom this Land was given, yet the mystical Sense and Substance of it appertains likewise to us Christians; for the Land of *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven, and under the Promise of that was couch'd another and better Country: So *Abraham* and *Sarah* understood it, who look'd thro' this Land of Promise to a better and heavenly Country, and so 'tis expounded by Christ and his Apostles, who will us to tread in the Steps of those Forerunners in the Faith, that look'd upon themselves as Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth, and by their Patience and Constancy shew'd that they sought another, even a celestial Country, where their long Life is run into Eternity, and their happy Days crown'd with Glory and Immortality.

The Sum of all is, that the Promise of a long Life was literally intended and fulfill'd to the Jews by their enjoying many and happy Days in the Land of *Canaan*. To the

Christians it is fulfill'd partly in the Letter, and partly in the Mystery; in the Letter, by enjoying a long and prosperous Life upon Earth, when it is convenient for them; in the Mystery, by translating them to a longer and happier Life in Heaven: the Apostle affirming that Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come; 1 *Tim.* 4. 8.

And here we may observe the Congruity between the Duty and the Reward: They who are grateful to those, from whom under God they receive Life, shall enjoy that Life long and well; which Mercy is deriv'd partly from the Blessing of God upon dutiful Children, and partly from the Care, Sustainance, and Prayers of pious Parents.

This is a brief Account of what is requir'd in this Commandment; namely, a faithful Discharge of the Duties we owe to all those who by any Relation, Power, or Pre-eminence, are plac'd above us, to whom we are to pay all Acts both of internal and external Honour. Hereunto we are encourag'd by the greatest of all Rewards, *viz.* length of Days here in this World, when it shall make for our Happiness, and eternal Life in the World to come; both which are owing not only to the Dispensations of Divine Providence, but in some measure to the nature of the thing: for Obedience to Superiors keeps all things in that due Order and Decorum, that conduces much to the Comfort and Continuance of Life, and tends mightily to promote both the publick and private Peace. And now nothing remains, but to be mindful of these Duties in our several Stations, and to pay all that Honour, Reverence, and Obedience, that is due to our respective Superiors: so will the World turn upon the right Hinges, and we shall enjoy Peace here, and endless Prosperity hereafter.



DISCOURSE XIII.

EXOD. XX. 12.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

WE have seen the Affirmative Part of this Commandment, which requires all Inferiors to pay the several Offices of Duty and Observance to their respective Superiors: I come now to the Negative Part of it, which forbids all unsuitable Behaviour and Deportment towards them; for the Precept of honouring Father and Mother, must necessarily condemn the contrary Practice of dishonouring them. Who are meant by Father and Mother, has been already open'd, viz. all our Superiors, both Natural, Spiritual, and Political. What is the Honour due to them by this Law, has been likewise particularly describ'd.

Now the withholding of this Honour, and acting contrary thereto, is the dishonouring of them, and is the Fault forbidden in this Commandment. And therefore,

(1.) Childrens withholding the Honour and Obedience due to their natural Parents, is here plainly condemn'd. This is an unnatural Vice, attended with the highest Ingratitude, and is therefore condemn'd by the Voice of Nature; beside which, 'tis severely censur'd and threaten'd in the Book of God: *Cursed be he that setteth light by Father or Mother*, Deut. 27. 16. *And he that curseth Father or Mother, let him die the Death*, Exod. 21. 17. The rebellious Son, that would not obey the Voice of his Father, nor hearken to the Counsel of his Mother, was by the Law to be ston'd to Death by all the Men of the City. Solomon tells us, that *the Eye that mocketh his Father, or despiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valleys shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it*; Prov. 30. 17. meaning, that God, in a dreadful and wonderful manner, will avenge that unnatural Wickedness.

Nature and Guilt of this Sin, which is so odious in the sight of God and Man, that both he that practiseth it, and he that would excuse it, must incur the Censure and Punishment of both.

We read indeed of a corrupt Doctrine of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, which taught Children to evade their Duty to their Parents, and by a pretended Gift call'd *Corban*, offer'd for them at the Altar, would excuse them from succouring and relieving them in their greatest Necessities? *Mat. 15. 5, 6. Whosoever shall say to his Father and Mother, It is a Gift by whatsoever thou mayst be profited by me, and honour not his Father or Mother, shall be free.* But this is condemn'd by our Saviour as a vile piece of Hypocrisy, whereby they endeavour'd to evacuate the Law, and make the Commandments of God of none effect by their Traditions. For Nature itself, as well as Religion, will teach us to sustain those in their Need, by whom we ourselves have been sustain'd; and that our greatest Respects and Services must be due to those, to whom we owe our Being. And therefore to withdraw that Love and Assistance that is due to Parents, to turn the deaf Ear to their Counsel and Admonitions, to disclose their Nakedness, and rather to mock at than hide their Infirmities; is a manifest Violation of the Honour we are here requir'd to pay them, and a plain Breach of this Commandment.

(2.) All Disobedience to Political or Civil Parents, that is, to Magistrates and Governors, is here forbidden; for these are the Fathers of our Country, that preside over us for good, and provide for our Safety and Welfare: 'Tis by them that we enjoy great Quietness, and very worthy Deeds are done to the whole Nation by their Providence, as *Tertullus* the Orator told *Felix* the Governour, *Acts 24. 2, 3.* And therefore 'tis fit that we accept it always and in all Places with all Thankfulness, rendring them all Honour for the great Care they take of us, and paying them Obedience for the many Blessings we enjoy by their Vigilance. Contrary hereunto is all Contempt and Resistance of lawful Authority, all Affronts offer'd to the Persons, and all Disobedience to the Laws of Princes. The Apostle tells us that to resist the higher Powers, is to resist the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation: *Rom. 13. 2, 5.* They are God's Ministers as well as our Fathers, and therefore we are to submit to them both for God's sake and our own, obeying them that have the

Rule

Rule over us, without murmuring or resistance.

We may not resist them even in our Hearts, by wishing or desiring any ill to them; for we are bid *not to curse the King, no not in our Thoughts, for a Bird of the Air shall carry the Voice, and that which hath Wings shall tell the matter*; Eccles. 10. 20.

We may not resist them with the Head, by plotting or contriving against them; for to conspire against our Prince, is to be *Confederate against God, and to take Counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed*. Again,

We may not resist them with the Tongue, by speaking evil of them, or *slandering the Footsteps of God's Anointed*; for we are strictly charg'd not to *speak evil of the Ruler of the People*.

Much less may we resist them with the Hand, by taking up Arms or fighting against them; for *who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be blameless?* 2 Sam. 1. *Against a King* (saith Solomon) *there is no rising up*. There is no doing it either lawfully or safely, for we may not take upon us to resist, whom we are requir'd to obey; they that do so, are threatned with Damnation, that is, not only with all the present Punishments of this Life, but with eternal Misery and Destruction in the next.

(3.) All Disobedience to our spiritual Fathers, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, is forbidden likewise in this Commandment: for we are strictly charg'd to *obey them that rule over us in the Lord, for they watch for our Souls; to esteem them highly for their Work sake; to look upon them as the Ministers and Ambassadors of Christ: and so to account them worthy of double Honour*, viz. the inward Honour and Reverence of the Mind, and the outward Honour and Respect of the Body, both which are due to them for their Calling and Work sake: for these spiritual Fathers perform the same or like Offices to our Souls, that our natural Parents do to our Bodies; they *beget us again unto God thro' the Gospel; they travail in Birth with us, till Christ be form'd in us; they feed us with Milk, whilst we are Infants in Christianity; and give us stronger Meats, when we arrive at the Stature of Men in Christ Jesus*: For which good Offices we are to account of them as our Fathers in God, and to love, fear, and honour them, as those that are appointed to teach and rule over us. The Apostle wills us to hearken and submit to them as our spiritual Guides, Heb. 13. 17. that is, to receive their Instruc-

tions, and not only to remember but to put in practice all their pious Exhortations. Whatsoever they deliver to us either in publick Preaching or in private Admonitions, agreeable to God's Word, is to be embrac'd and obey'd as coming from him; for *he that heareth you* (saith Christ) *heareth me*. Accordingly, we find St. Paul commending the Romans, that *they obey'd from the Heart that Form of Doctrine that was deliver'd to them*, Rom. 6. 17. Now to prove refractory to that Spiritual Power which Christ hath ordain'd in his Church, to turn the deaf Ear to the Call of his Ministers, to despise their Censures, and to reject their Doctrine, is to despise Christ, and is a great piece of that disobedience to Superiors forbidden in this Commandment. This is what St. Jude styles, *despising Dominions, and speaking evil of Dignities*: which is one part of the Character of those that are reserved for the Judgment of the last Day, Jude 6.

(4.) Here is forbidden likewise all Disobedience to Masters and Governors of Families. These are in a sense Fathers to all that are plac'd under them, being entrusted with the Care and good Government of those lesser Societies; and as they are to rule with Diligence and Clemency, without being imperious or tyrannical to any of their Dependents, so ought these to obey with Cheerfulness, and not to gain-say or neglect their lawful Injunctions: and therefore all Undutifulness of Wives to their Husbands, and Unfaithfulness of Servants to their Masters, stand condemn'd by this Law. The unjust Steward that embezzled his Master's Goods, receiv'd the Doom of a wicked and faithless Servant, to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer Darknes; and all careless, false, and unprofitable Servants will in the end fare no better.

Lastly, here is forbidden all indecent and disrespectful Behaviour to all our Superiors in Age, Quality, or any other Gifts and Endowments of the Mind. Aged Men are in Scripture and common Use styl'd Fathers, and are to be honour'd and treated by us as such; their Gravity and Experience challenge the Respect, and command the Veneration of younger Years: and therefore to despise old Age, or withhold the Respect due to grey Hairs, is a plain Violation of this Precept, which requires us to *honour Father and Mother*. For it is a Breach of good Manners, and a Contempt of Order and Decency, to deny them that Regard and Reverence which God and Nature have appointed for them;

them; which is a matter so displeasing unto God, that we find many Instances of Divine Vengeance on such as practise it. A remarkable one we have in *2 Kings* 2. 23, 24. where we read, that when *Elisha* was going to *Bethel*, there came forth Children out of the City, mocking him, and saying, *Go up thou Bald-pate! Go up thou Bald-pate!* at which *Elisha* turn'd back, and looking on them, curs'd them in the Name of the Lord: and there came forth two She-Bears out of the Wood, and tore forty two Children in pieces: So highly was God Almighty offended at their mocking and deriding the old Prophet! Hence the Prophet *Isaiah* reckons it a Curse or Judgment upon any Nation, when the Children behave themselves proudly against the Antients, *Isa.* 3. 5. And this should teach all Children this piece of Education, to rise up to grey Hairs, and not to deride, but reverence Old Age. Again,

They that excel others in any of the Gifts and Endowments of the Mind, are often styl'd Fathers; their Learning and Wisdom giving them a sort of Pre-eminence and Superiority above others that have a scantier Proportion. Now as these are to be thankful to God for the Gifts bestow'd on them, and likewise to use them to the Ends for which they were given, so are others requir'd to reverence them upon the account of them, not lessening or detracting from their Abilities, but owning the Grace of God, and extolling his Goodness towards them; paying a Deference to their better Judgment, being willing to learn of them, and submitting to their greater Wisdom. This Lesson, Christian Modesty itself teaches us, to esteem others better than ourselves, especially those that are so, and in Honour to prefer one another, as the Apostle directs *Rom.* 12. In a word,

All that are superior to us in Birth, Quality, Estate, or in any Degree in the World, are in the Language of the Scripture call'd Fathers; whom we are therefore requir'd to honour: so that to envy or derogate from any one's Greatness, to deny the Place or Respect due to their Degree or Quality, to set up the Base above the Honourable, and to refuse to yield to the Wisdom and Authority of our Betters; is to break the Order of the World, and a manifest Breach of this Commandment.

Thus we see as well what is forbidden, as what is requir'd in this first Precept of the second Table; which settles the relative Duties of Superiors and Inferiors towards each other.

And

And as we are encourag'd to the Observation of this Precept by the Promise of a long Life, so is there a Threatning of shorter and worse Days imply'd in it to the Breakers of it : for the Promise annex'd to this Law would be of little force, if the Breakers of it fare as well and live as long as they that keep it. But that 'tis otherwise, both the Precepts and Examples of Holy Scripture may easily satisfy us. For as God prolongs the Days of dutiful and obedient Children, so does he shorten the Days of the stubborn and disobedient ; commanding those that curse Father and Mother to be put to death, *Deut.* 27. 16. Indeed, disobedient Children wanting the Influence of the Divine Blessing, frequently fall into those Evils that shorten their Days, and bring them to untimely ends : as may be seen in *Abimelech* and *Abshalom*, who were both cut off for their Disobedience and sell a Sacrifice to their own Folly and Rashness. But as Length of Days in the Land of *Canaan* betoken'd a more immortal Life to be enjoy'd in Heaven, so to be deprived of it represents everlasting Death, and leads to an endless Abode in the Regions of Woe and Misery. And as the former affords abundant Encouragement to do what is requir'd, so is the latter a sufficient Determent from what is forbidden in this Commandment.



DISCOURSE XIV.

EXOD XX. 13.

Thou shalt not Kill.

HAVING briefly explain'd the Relative Duties that belong to Men as Members of Society, and shew'd the Demeanour due to the several Stations and Capacities in which they stand to one another, the Subject of the Fifth Commandment : I proceed to the following Precepts of the Second Table, which respect Men in the private Capacity, and tend to secure them in all the Rights and Properties appertaining thereunto. And because the first and dearest thing we possess, is Life ; therefore the Sixth Commandment helps to preserve that, and to secure our Persons from all Violence and Bloodshed, in these words *Thou shalt not kill.*

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Which Commandment being Negative, I must first consider what is forbidden, and then what is requir'd in it. And here the great thing prohibited in this Precept, is the attempting upon or taking away Life, together with all kind of Violence offer'd to the Person of any.

But for the better understanding hereof, 'twill be necessary to enquire, whether all killing or taking away of Life be here condemn'd as unlawful: and if not, what sort of killing that is, which is here forbidden?

For the first, to omit the killing of brute Beasts, about which there can be no question, the great Maker and Sovereign of the World having granted to Mankind the free Use and full Dominion over them: The only difficulty is, how far it may be lawful to destroy those of our own Kind, or to take away the Life of any human Creature.

For the resolving whereof, it is certain that God Almighty, the sole Lord and Disposer of all things, has granted to some Persons a Power of Life and Death for the good of the Whole, as will be evident in the following Cases.

1. Magistrates in the Execution of Justice, may and ought to put capital Offenders to death, without the Breach of this Law; for God himself hath requir'd, that *whosoever sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*, Gen. 9. 6. This is no more than is necessary for the common Safety; for without this, Cruelty would every where abound, and the Cries of Murder and Bloodshedding would be daily heard in our streets. To prevent which, 'tis farther added, *Thine Eye shall not pity, nor thy Hand spare, but Life shall go for Life*; Deut. 19. 21. To this end hath God intrusted Magistrates with the Sword of Justice, which they are requir'd *not to bear in vain*, but to draw it forth *to the terror of Evil-doers, and the defense of those that do well*: Hence they are styl'd *God's Ministers*, and *Avengers* *to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*, Rom. 13. 4. 'Tis the Magistrate's Duty and Province to preserve the publick Peace, by punishing such as break it; and where the Offence is capital, they may, in a due Course of Justice, dispose of Mens Lives, who by the Laws of God and Man have justly forfeited them.

2. Soldiers authoriz'd by Sovereign Powers in a lawful War, may kill and slay, without breaking this Commandment. For War, in the differences between Princes, is an Appeal to Heaven for Justice, and referring Cases to God Almighty,

Almighty, which cannot be otherwise decided ; in which cases the Battel is the Lord's, and they that fight in them receive their Commission from him. It cannot be doubted but Sovereign Princes may lawfully make war against wrongful Invaders and rebellious Subjects ; and when amicable means will not prevail, may maintain the Safety and Welfare of their Kingdoms by arm'd Violence. What the Law is to private Persons, that the Sword is to publick Governours ; the only Weapon to defend their Rights, and decide those Controversies that cannot be try'd at any other Bar. In all such cases, matters are refer'd to the Lord of Hosts, the Sovereign Protector of Princes, and they that are engag'd in them may lawfully kill without Murder. And therefore we read, that when the Soldiers came to *John* the Baptist for Instruction in their Duty, he did not bid them lay down their Arms, or fight no more for their Prince, but only will'd them *to do no Violence in any private Quarrels, to accuse no Man falsely, and to be content with their Wages ; Luke 3. 14.*

3. Private Persons in their own necessary Defense may likewise kill without any Breach of this Commandment : for God hath given to every Man a Right to defend his Life against all unjust and inevitable Violence ; and consequently where any is suddenly or secretly assaulted without any visible means of escaping, he may safely take away another's Life to secure his own. Indeed, where the danger is not so sudden or imminent, but recourse may be had to the Magistrate for Protection, there the matter must be respited, and left to him who is God's Minister for this purpose ; but where there is no time for this, every Man is a Magistrate to himself, to vindicate his own Cause, and to preserve his own Life, tho with the loss of another's. Hence God Almighty allows the killing of a Thief or House-breaker, who seizes upon us unawares, and leaves no other way to prevent or redress the Injury ; *Exod. 22. 2, 3.* This is agreeable not only to the Law of God, but to the Law of Nature and Reason, and is accordingly allow'd by the Laws of all Countries. So that all sorts of killing come not within the Meaning and Prohibition of this Law ; for both the Magistrate in the Execution of Justice, the Soldier in a lawful War, and every private Person in his own necessary Defense, may take away another's Life, and be guiltless.

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Beside which, there is another sort of killing, that is purely Accidental, and without any Intention, which is not concern'd in the Design or Meaning of this Precept; this is in the Law call'd Man-slaughter: an Instance whereof we have in Holy Scripture, of one who *fetching a stroke with his Axe in hewing of Wood*, had the ill-luck to have *the Head of it fall off from the Helve, and to slay his Neighbour unawares*; Deut. 19. 5. This being perfectly casual, and beside the Intention, we find excus'd by God himself, who appointed Cities of Refuge for such innocent Man-slayers to fly unto, to be safe from the Avenger of Blood, as we read in that Chapter.

But what then is the Killing here forbidden in this Commandment?

In answer to which, I say, first in general, that all voluntary Murder or shedding of Blood, without sufficient Warrant and Authority from God, is the thing forbidden in this Law; yea, all secret Designs and Intentions of taking away Life in this way, are punishable by God's Law, tho they may escape the Censure of earthly Tribunals: for they that are guilty of them, take God's work out of his hand, and will needs execute that Vengeance which alone belongs to him. More particularly, the Killing here condemn'd is of two sorts; the killing of a Man's self, and the killing of any other.

(1.) I say, the killing of a Man's self stands here condemn'd as the grossest of all Murder: This is an unnatural Crime, and were it not for some Examples we have of it in Scripture, and more in the Experience of the World, one would wonder how any should be induc'd to commit it; for this is contrary to the Law of Self-preservation, which is planted in the Natures of all Creatures, and directly opposes all the Principles of Reason and Religion. I know some Philosophers have commended and advis'd to it as a piece of Gallantry, to rid themselves of those Troubles, which others live to complain of: whereas it betrays much more of Cowardice than Courage, to shrink from those Evils which they should encounter, and lightly to sink under that burden, which it behoves them manfully to bear. Besides, 'tis a high Usurpation upon God's Prerogative, who has not put our Lives in our own power, but reserv'd to himself the disposal of them: so that we cannot without great Injustice done to him, dispose of them as we please. Yea, Self-murder is an Affront not only to the Power, but the Providence

Providence of God ; for it implies a great Dissatisfaction in his present Dealings, and an utter Distrust of his Goodness for the future.

Moreover, this Sin is a manifest Injury to our Friends and Country ; who claim a just share in us ; for we are not born for ourselves only, but for the Benefit and Comfort of others : and therefore no Man can make himself away, without apparent wrong to those, who have a Right to his Service and Assistance.

But above all, Self-murder brings an irreparable damage to a Man's self, for it leaves no room for Repentance ; but being taken away in the very Act of sinning, excludes him from all hopes of Mercy and Pardon, and so proves at once the Destruction of Body and Soul.

(2.) All wilful Murder, or taking away the Life of another Person, is directly forbidden in this Commandment ; and according to the different Degrees and Quality of the Persons to whom such Violence is offer'd, does the Guilt of this Sin increase. And therefore,

1. All King-killing, or treasonable Conspiracies against the Lives of Princes, is the highest Degree of Murder ; for since the Commonwealth lives and breathes in them, and their Welfare is the common Safety, to design against them, is to assault the Whole, and undermine the Peace and Welfare of Mankind : for which reason the Persons of Princes have been ever esteem'd sacred and inviolable, and to assault them, is like cutting off the Head, which is evermore fatal to the whole Body. To fight against lawful Powers, is without any Commission from God, who hath made Kings supreme in their Dominions, and consequently not to be overrul'd or resisted by those that are subjected to them. Hence we read of our Blessed Saviour, that tho he were able to scatter all the Powers upon Earth, yet he never offer'd the least Resistance to the Secular Powers : and when St. Peter drew his Sword in one of the justest Causes, as might be thought, even the Defence of his Saviour, he receiv'd a check for his mistaken Zeal, and was bid to put up his Sword with this Rebuke, *He that thus useth the Sword, shall perish by the Sword.* And as the killing of Kings, so likewise of any other private Person, is the Murder prohibited by this Law. And therefore,

2. All Duels or private Decisions of Mens Quarrels by the Sword, are forbidden by this Commandment ; for this is a wresting the Sword of Justice out of those hands in which

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which God hath put it, and taking it without any Warrant into our own. God Almighty, who hath the sole Power of Life and Death, hath authoriz'd Magistrates to execute Wrath upon him that doth evil, but no private Person hath any such Grant or Authority over the Life of any other: so that what is Justice in the one, is Murder in the other. Yea, this is wresting Vengeance out of God's hands, who claims it as his due, and not to be invaded by another: *For Vengeance is mine (saith he) and I will repay.* So that to vindicate our Quarrels with our own hands, is not only to distrust the Power and Goodness of God, but to usurp upon his Prerogative; and tho the Vindication of Mens Honour is the usual Plea for these Barbarities, yet there is scarce any thing that more reflects upon the Honour of God, or more impairs their own.

In short, all voluntary taking away our Neighbour's Life, either by open Violence, or secret Contrivance, whether it be immediately by ourselves, or by instigating, advising or encouraging of others, or any way becoming instrumental and accessory thereto, is the Sin prohibited in this Precept; the great Evil and Danger whereof will be evident to any that will consider,

1. The great Indignity that is hereby offer'd to our Maker, who as he is the sole Giver, so he is the sole Disposer of all Mens Lives: and therefore to take away Life without his Consent, and against his Will, is to rob God of his Right over his Creatures, to take away his Power of Life and Death, and to usurp upon the Tribunal of Heaven. Moreover, God having made Man in his own Image, to murder any, is to destroy his Image; yea, to murder him in Effigy, which is the highest piece of Contempt that can be offer'd him. Again,

2. Murder is a high piece of Injustice to the Publick; for it robs the King of a Subject, and the Country of a Member, that might be serviceable to both.

Lastly, 'Tis an unspeakable Injury to the Party himself, who is hereby depriv'd of the dearest and most invaluable Blessing, his Life, with all the Comforts and Advantages of it: yea, the murder'd Person is robb'd not only of his temporal Life, but is extremely hazarded as to his future and eternal State; for he is cut short of his Time for Repentance, and may perhaps lose his Opportunity of making Peace with God: which is an irreparable Injury, for which no sufficient Amends or Satisfaction can be made.

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And as the Sin of Murder is thus inexpressibly great, so is the Guilt and Danger of it no less; for 'tis a crying Sin, that calls loudly for Vengeance, and seldom or never misses of it. It brings a Stain and Pollution upon a whole Country, where 'tis committed, which is not to be wash'd out but by the Blood of the Murderer.

In short then, all Invasion upon the Life or Person of our Neighbour is the great Sin here forbidden. But because our blessed Saviour, in expounding this Commandment, hath extended it to the prohibiting all the Degrees, Motives and Occasions of this Evil, 'twill be requisite briefly to consider some of the chief of them. And,

1. All maiming, wounding, or any ways impairing the Life or Limbs of another, are forbidden by this Law; for this is a degree of Murder, and often leads to it: and tho' it do not always take away Life, yet it destroys all the Comfort of it, and renders it many times more burdensome and less desirable than Death itself; and therefore we are charg'd to *do Violence to no Man*, nor to hurt any in Body, Goods or Name.

2. All rash, causeless and immoderate Anger, stands here condemn'd as a frequent occasion of this Evil; for so our Saviour tells us, *Mat. 5. 21, 22.* and sad Experience informs us of many Quarrels that begin with Anger, and end in Slaughter: not that all Anger is sinful, for we are bid to be *angry and sin not*; but only when 'tis inordinate, that is, when we are angry without a Cause, when we suffer our Passion to run too high, or to continue too long: then doth it transport us beyond the bounds of Meekness and Decency, and hurry us on to all the Acts of Outrage and Violence.

3. All reproachful and contumelious Language falls under the prohibition of this Law; for this often stirs up Wrath, and is a frequent occasion of Duels and Bloodshed: and therefore our Saviour cautions us against saying to our Brother *Racha*, which signifies a vain empty Fellow; and much more against calling him *Fool*, which will bring us in danger of the Judgment, for the many Evils that ensue from such detracting and opprobrious Language, which often engenders Strife, and draws on Murder and Blood. And if, as our Saviour tells us, we are to give an account of every idle Word that does no good, how much more are we to reckon for such pernicious and provoking Words, as occasion so much harm?

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Lastly, All Envy, Hatred and Malice are things prohibited in this Precept; for these, we all know, are great occasions of Murder and Cruelty. *Cain*, out of Envy, *slew his Brother Abel*, because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous, 1 John 3. 12. Out of the Heart (saith our Saviour) proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, &c. Mat. 19. Where Malice and Hatred are harbour'd in the Heart, there Murder and all sorts of Villany break out in the Hand; for these beget those secret Grudges, Spite and Animosity that fire Mens Spirits, and make them study nothing but Mischief and Revenge: for which reason, St. *John* declares, that he that hateth his Brother is a Murderer, 1 John 3. 15.

Thus I have briefly shew'd what is forbidden in this Commandment, to wit, all kind of Violence offer'd to the Person of any, more especially the taking away of Life by Murder, Affassination, Poison, or any other unlawful Means; together with all the Motives and Inducements leading thereunto: All which we are here requir'd carefully to avoid. And because we daily meet with many occasions of Anger and Animosity, that may tempt to these Enormities, we are to abstain from all appearance of Evil, and watch and pray that we enter not into Temptation.



DISCOURSE XV.

EXOD. XX. 13.

Thou shalt not Kill.

THE Design of this Precept (as I shew'd in my last) is to secure Men in their Lives and Limbs, and to guard their Persons from all kind of Violence. But because the negative Precept always includes an affirmative Duty, I proceed now to what is requir'd in this Commandment; and that is, the Preservation of Life, and performing all good Offices tending thereunto.

And here, to omit the Preservation of our own Lives, about which Nature itself ordinarily prompts Men to be sufficiently solicitous, I am to shew what Religion teaches us to do for the Preservation of others. 'Tis a great mistake

to think or say with *Cain*, that we are not *our Brothers Keepers*, and that we may cast off all Care and Concern for others Welfare; for God has made us sociable Creatures, and plac'd us in a condition of mutual Need and Dependence, that we may be mindful of and helpful to one another. To which end, he cautions us against that narrow contracted Spirit, that confines all our Care at home, whereby Men become *Lovers of themselves*, and only seek *their own*; whereas Religion tends to enlarge Mens Hearts, and to make others the Object of their Concern and Care: for the Precepts of the Second Table require us to love *our Neighbour as ourselves*; and the Apostle directs, *As we have Opportunity, to do good unto all Men*, Gal. 6. 10.

Now because the Preservation of Mens Lives, and the Comfort of them, depends very much upon the practice of some Christian Virtues necessary to that end, it will be requisite to explain and treat of them as things requir'd in this Commandment. And here the

First and Great thing requir'd to this end, is the Virtue of Humanity. This is that Benevolence or *Good-will towards Men* implanted in our Natures by God himself, and proclaim'd by the Angels at the Birth of our Saviour; whereby we are or should be inclin'd to wish well to Mankind, and instead of impairing the Life or Health of any, to do all the Service and good Offices we can to both.

To this we stand oblig'd by that common Nature whereof we are all Partakers, which being the same in all, is every where to be lov'd and regarded by us; for our Neighbour is but ourself multiply'd and enlarg'd, the same Substance diffus'd and communicated to another Person: so that when we help our Brother, we are but kind to ourselves, and only cherish our own Flesh. The meanest Person is equally descended with ourselves, he hath the same Father in Heaven, and derives his Pedigree from the same earthly Parents; for *Adam* is the Father of us all, and *Eve* the Mother of all living: yea, God hath stamp'd his own Image on all Men, which is therefore to be respected in all, and not to be misus'd in any. Hence we find Murder condemn'd as an Affront offer'd to God, and a Violation of his Image, Gen. 9. 6.

But what Influence has this Virtue of Humanity upon the preserving of Life? Why great, sundry ways. For,

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(1.) It prevents all those Evils that are injurious to one another's Welfare ; it keeps Men from all kind of Violence and Cruelty, and is so far from doing, that it thinketh no Evil to any Man. And not only so, but,

(2.) It puts Men upon the practice of those things that tend to promote each other's good ; it makes Men love their Neighbours as themselves, and do to all Men as they would be done by : yea, it begets a Sympathy in Mens Nature, enclining them to share in one another's Joys and Sorrows, bearing and easing one another's Burden ; and where that is, no harm can be done to the Lives or Persons of any : and therefore this Virtue is here requir'd for the Security of both.

2. Meekness is another great Help and Preservative of human Life, and therefore requir'd in this Commandment. This is that Virtue that restrains Mens Passions, and keeps them from the Impatiences of Anger, which are so uneasy both to themselves and others. What doleful Evils proceed from wild and ungovern'd Passions, daily Experience may inform us : What Rancour and Malice they create in the Mind ; what bitter and reviling Language they draw from the Mouth ; what Violence and Bloodshed they occasion by the Hand, are Matters too well known to need any Proof. Indeed, nothing is more injurious to Mens Lives and Persons than unbridled Passions, which hurry them on headlong into the greatest Mischiefs.

Now Meekness is the Grace that calms these boisterous Passions, allays the Storms of the Mind, and preserves it from the bad Effects of Rage and Impatience. For this reason, we have many Precepts and Exhortations in Scripture to this Virtue : St. Paul wills us to be *meek and patient towards all Men, to put away all Bitterness and Wrath, all Clamour and Evil speaking, with all Malice* ; Eph. 4. 31. *to be strengthen'd with all Might unto all Patience and Long-suffering*, Col. 1. 11. To give way to Wrath, is to give place to the Devil, and that will lead to all Outrage and Villany ; but to subdue our Passions, is to resist the Devil, and to give the Tempter no power over us : by this we quench the Sparks before they break into a Flame, and put a stop to the beginnings of Evil. In a word, this excellent Virtue serves to prevent all the Murder and Mischief forbidden in this Commandment ; and therefore the Practice of it must be here requir'd, for the Preservation of our Lives and Limbs.

3. Peaceableness is another thing requir'd to this end: This is a Virtue near a kin to, and proceeding from, the former; for Meekness and Gentleness of Spirit naturally leads to Peace, and the subduing of the Passions conduces much, not only to the inward Quiet of our own Minds, but to the living peaceably with one another. And because the Safety of Mens Lives and Persons depends very much upon the Practice of this Virtue, the Apostle in sundry places earnestly exhorts to it, as a good Means to preserve them: *If it be possible (saith he) as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. 12. 18. And elsewhere, *Followe Peace with all Men, without which no Man shall see the Lord*. This quiet and peaceable Disposition tends to prevent those Quarrels that molest the World, and prove so fatal to Mankind, and is therefore a great Guard and Security to Mens Lives. There is, indeed, in some Men a certain Peevishness and Perverseness of Spirit, that makes them delight in Brawls and Contention; they take a secret pleasure in raising Commotions in the State, Contentions in Families, and Differences among Neighbours; which have many times a very bad Influence upon the whole, and end in Slaughter and Destruction. Such turbulent and unquiet Spirits are the Pests and Troublers of the World, that plague the Neighbourhood where they live, and involve Countries in Blood and Confusion; yea, such Incendiaries as these are the very Imps of Satan, and do the Works of the Devil, who was a Murderer from the Beginning, and the Father of them.

Now to prevent these Evils, we are to root out of our Minds all Inclinations to Discord and Contention, and labour for such a sedate and peaceable Frame of Spirit, as may dispose us to love and live easily by one another. This, Reason, as well as Religion, teaches us; and being necessary to the preservation and comfort of each other's Lives, must be look'd upon as requir'd in this Commandment.

4. Another Duty enjoyn'd by this Precept, is that of Charity and giving of Alms: which is so necessary to the support and sustaining of Life in cases of want, that many without relief would perish and sink under them: and therefore we find many strict Injunctions to this excellent Virtue; *Give Alms of such things as ye possess*, Luke 11. 41. *Above all things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection*, Col. 3. 14. Now Charity relates both to the Souls

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and Bodies of our Neighbours, both which are necessary to the Support and Comfort of human Life; and because the Wants and Necessities of Mankind are various, the Acts of Charity must be so too. As,

(1.) To feed the Hungry, and to afford them at least so much of Sustenance, as to keep them from Starving.

(2.) To give drink to the Thirsty, that they may not pine away with Drought, or perish for lack of Moisture.

(3.) To clothe the Naked, to keep them from the Injuries of the Weather, and to preserve them from the fatal Evils of Cold and Nakedness.

(4.) To entertain Strangers, that they may not be left harbourless, or perish for want of necessary and convenient Reception.

(5.) To redeem Captives, and to succour and enlarge Prisoners, that they may not languish under the Pressures of Durance and Captivity.

(6.) To visit the Sick, to assist them with our Counsel and our Prayers, and to do all other good Offices as their Necessities shall require.

Lastly, To find Imployment for mean and indigent Persons, who are to live by their Labour, and to assist them in placing out their Children in honest Trades and Callings: These, and the like Acts of Charity, are so necessary to the preserving of human Life here, and the procuring of eternal Life hereafter, that we are to look upon them as enjoin'd in this Commandment.

How much these things conduce to the preserving of human Life, is obvious to any that considers the several Wants and Necessities of Mankind; for how many would starve with Hunger, and perish with Thirst, if not reliev'd by these Acts of Charity? How many would die with Cold and Nakedness, if not cloth'd and arm'd against them? Would not some be left harbourless, and perish for lack of Necessaries, if they were not receiv'd into Houses, and supported under some unavoidable Accidents? How many would languish under hard Bondage, and pine away in Prisons and Durance, if they were not succour'd under those Calamities? What would become of the Lives and Families of many Persons, if they were not employ'd and assisted in their Labours by those that are enabled to do it? In a word,

To perform these Acts and Offices of Charity, is in the Scripture-sense to save Life; and to neglect them, is to lose

and destroy it: the things requir'd and forbidden in the Commandment.

But I may not pass over this weighty Duty, without advising and stirring up to the Practice of it. To which end consider,

(1.) That as there is no one Precept more press'd and recommended to us, than this of Charity; so there is none wherein our Saviour hath set forth himself as a higher Example: for *he went up and down doing good*, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and would have his Followers imitate him in nothing more than in the Acts of Mercy and Charity.

(2.) The Principles of Nature and Reason prompt us to be helpful to one another: for God has planted in us a Love to Mankind, and plac'd us in a mutual need and dependence on each other: so that every one may take their turns of asking and receiving another's Bounty; and to withhold it in Cases of Necessity, is Barbarous and inhuman.

(3.) The Principles of Gratitude exact this from us, to communicate to each others Necessities; for 'tis from the Divine Bounty that we receive all we have, and Gratitude requires some Returns to be made to the Owner and Bestower of it: And because *our Goodness extendeth not to him*, he hath order'd it to be paid to such as need our Assistance, whom he has made his Proxies and Receivers. To which we may add,

(4.) That 'tis a noble and divine thing to preserve Life, and to rescue the Poor from Misery; for this is to resemble God in Acts of Bounty and Beneficence to his Creatures, and to co-operate with our Maker in saving the Life he gives them.

Lastly, These Acts of Charity will redound to our temporal and eternal Advantages; for God is wont to multiply his Blessings here on such as exercise them, and will not fail to crown them with far greater Blessings hereafter. *He that giveth a Cup of cold Water to a needy Disciple, shall not miss of a Reward*; for Christ reckons that to be done to him, which is done to his poor Members. And Solomon tells us, *That all we give this way is lent to the Lord, and will be surely repaid with Interest*. In short,

The Works of Mercy and Charity will be the great things enquir'd into at the last Day, and all Men shall receive their doom, according as they shall be found to have practis'd

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practis'd or neglected them. The Sentence of Absolution is, *Come ye Blessed, for I was Hungry, and ye gave me Meat,* &c. the Sentence of Condemnation, *Go ye Cursed, for I was Thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink,* &c. So that they who have supported the Lives of others, shall save their own; and they who have neglected it, shall lose them: for *such shall have Judgment without Mercy, who have shew'd no Mercy.*

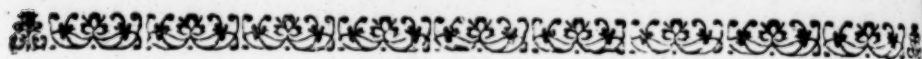
5. The last, tho none of the least Virtues tending to the preservation of human Life, is the forgiving of Injuries, or being easily reconcil'd to those that do them. This is a Duty frequently urg'd and inculcated upon us in Holy Scripture. *Recompense to no Man Evil for Evil: Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves, for Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,* Rom. 12. 17, 19. *Put on as the Elect of God, Bowels of Compassion, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any Man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye,* Col. 3. 13. All which, will us not to be easily mov'd or inflam'd at every Provocation, but to pass by lesser Trespasses and Offences: Not that we are to pass by all Injuries or Indignities without any reparation, for this would make us a Butt for every one to shoot at, and instead of removing, would encourage Men to multiply Wrongs and Insolencies; but that we may not avenge ourselves, or go about to repair Injuries with our own Hands, for that occasions Duels and Slaughter, and is a Shedder of much Blood. To prevent which, we are to forgive small Matters and redress greater by a legal Reparation: This is to *render unto God the things that are God's*, by leaving Vengeance to him to whom it belongs, and is many times a better way of repairing Injuries than revenging them.

How much this tends to the Quiet and Preservation of Mens Lives, is obvious to any that considers how many Quarrels and Differences are hereby prevented, and how it preserves from all the disquieting Evils and Dangers of Revenge; for which reason, *Solomon* declares it to be not only the Safety, but the *Glory of a Man to pass by an Offence.*

Thus we see shedding of Blood to be the great Sin prohibited in this Law, which is so heinous an Evil in God's sight, that he declares he will not only *demand the Life of Man at the hands of Men, but of Beasts too*; Gen. 9. 5. *For if an Ox gor'd a Man that he died, the Ox itself was*

to be slain, and the Flesh thereof to be cast away as an Abomination; Exod. 21. 28, 29. which should stir up in us a just Abhorrence of this vile and detestable Crime.

And as we are to abstain from all the degrees and occasions of Murder, so are we to use all good Means for the preserving our own Lives, and the Lives of others.



DISCOURSE XVI.

EXOD. XX. 14.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

HAVING shew'd the great care taken in the Sixth Commandment for the Security of Mens Lives, I proceed now to the Seventh, which helps to secure them in the quiet possession and enjoyment of their Wives. The former considers them in a single Capacity, and provides for the safety of their Persons from all kind of Violence: the latter in a double and conjugal State, and keeps them from the Violation of the Bonds of Wedlock. This is contain'd in these words, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*

This Precept being likewise Negative, I am to shew,

First, What is forbidden; and next, what is requir'd in it. For the

First, The thing prohibited in this Precept is all manner of Uncleanneſs and fleſhly Luſts, together with all the Occaſions, Temptations and Tendencies thereunto; and becauſe Adultery is the worſt or fouleſt of all fleſhly Luſts, 'tis therefore mention'd in the firſt place, and is here ſet to ſignify all the reſt. Now by Adultery here we are to underſtand,

1. And chiefly, The Incontinence of marry'd Perſons, or the Violation of the Bond of Wedlock; and this committed when either or both of the Parties (as it too often happens) break thoſe mutual Engagements and Endearments that are peculiar to that State, and defile themſelves with ſtrange Fleſh. He that attempts the Affection or Chafteity

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of his Neighbour's Wife, or invades the Enclosures which upon many accounts are appropriated to him, is truly and properly an Adulterer; and she that complies with such unchaste Motions, and yields to the leud Embraces of another, is truly an Adulteress: both which grievously offend against God, their Neighbour, and themselves.

(1.) 'Tis as *Joseph* expresses it, a great Wickedness committed against God, Gen. 39. 9. for 'tis the Violation of a divine Ordinance, dignify'd with many Marks of Respect and Sanctity, and the prostituting a sacred and solemn Mystery to vile and sinful Purposes. Moreover,

(2.) This is a great Injury and Offence against our Neighbour; for he is hereby wounded in the most sensible and tender Part, wherein the Comfort of his Life, and the Content of his Mind are most nearly concern'd: he is hereby robb'd of what he esteems the most dear and precious to him, the Love, Honour and Fidelity of his Wife; which perverts all the Ends of Marriage, and renders what was design'd for the Comfort, only the Plague and Misery of human Life. He is injur'd in his Estate and Family, by thrusting a spurious Brood into it, to be maintain'd by his Care and Industry, and depriving the lawful Issue of what might otherwise come to them. Again,

(3.) This is an Evil or Offence against the Persons themselves that commit it: for it robs them of their Credit, their Innocence, the Peace of their own Mind, and the Blessing of God, and too often puts them in a way of Wickedness, from whence they never return: so that this Sin at once defiles two Bodies, and destroys two Souls. Other Sinners (as one has observ'd) may perish singly without the Guilt of another's Damnation; the Swearer damns none by his Oaths but himself; the Drunkard by his Intemperance only drowns his own Soul: these and other Sinners require no Partnership in their Guilt, for they may be solitarily wicked, and perish alone; but this Sin of Adultery requires Partnership in the Commission of it, and involves both in the same Condemnation. Yea,

This Sin is not only a private but a publick Injury to human Society; for beside that it corrupts Mens Manners, and infects by Debauchery, it fills the World with a spurious Brood, and spoils the Race of Mankind. We find God Almighty appointed the Enclosures of Marriage, to preserve a holy Seed; for he so far abhor'd a false Brood that he would not suffer a *Bastard* to enter the Congrega-

tion to the tenth Generation, as we read *Deut.* 23. 2.

In short, Adultery is a high Dishonour to God, and a Violation of the most solemn Vows and Engagements. 'Tis an irreparable Injury to Men, for it fills the World with Jealousies, and destroys the Peace and Happiness of Man-kin'd: which will lead me from the Guilt, to consider the Danger of this Sin.

And here the Punishment assign'd to this Evil is very great, both here and hereafter: The temporal Punishment appointed for it in the Old Law, was no less than Death, as we read *Lev.* 20. 10. *The Man that committeth Adultery with his Neighbour's Wife, both the Adulterer and the Adulteress shall surely be put to death:* and the same is repeated, *Deut.* 22. 22. And indeed, the relaxing this Punishment hath let loose the Reins to Mens beastly Lusts and Appetites, which have prevail'd in these latter Ages, to the great Reproach and Scandal of Christianity. Such Monsters of Wickedness having risen up, as have boasted of their Leudness, glorying in their Shame, and priding themselves in the Follies of a filthy and debauch'd Conversation. But let such vile Miscreants know, that *God will not be mock'd*; and however they may, by the secret contrivance of their Wickedness or the Prevalency of Vice, avoid earthly Punishments, they shall never escape the Judgment of God: for Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge, *Heb.* 13. 4.

But tho Adultery be the great Sin particularly nam'd and prohibited in this Precept, yet there are many Abominations of the same kind compris'd and condemn'd under it. As,

1. Polygamy, or the Having more Wives than one, comes under the Sin of Adultery; it being a defiling of the Marriage-Bed, and running after strange Flesh. And tho this leud Practice has been allow'd among Turks and Infidels, yet hath it ever been condemn'd by the Laws of all Christian and civiliz'd Countries.

Now the Sinfulness hereof may easily appear from the first Institution of Marriage, in which God made but one Woman for one Man; and then putting them together, declar'd, that *they twain should be one Flesh*: which shew'd the Intention of God Almighty was to join one to one, and no more; for by adding another, they can neither *be twain* nor *one Flesh*; the assuming a third, increasing the Number, and dividing the Unity of Marriage. Moreover, the Law

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that requires the *leaving Father and Mother, and cleaving to a Wife*, necessarily implies the cleaving of one to one; for the addition of more must take off from the former, and unavoidably cause a Separation. Hence we find the Prophet *Malachi* thus reasoning with the Jews, *Did he not make one?* that is, one Male and one Female, and yet had he the residue of the Spirit; Mal. 2. 15. that is, he wanted not Power to make more if he had thought it fit, but he thus pair'd them at first to prevent a Plurality, and to keep them from a multiplication of Wives ever after. But the Prophet goes on, *Why did he make one?* And answers it, *That he might seek a godly Seed*: meaning, that he combin'd two into one by this sacred Knot, to preserve a holy Seed, and to people the World with a lawful Issue: *Wherefore* (as he concludes) *let every one take heed that he deal not treacherously with the Wife of his Youth*, by assuming another into his Bed, and abusing her by any unchaste Embraces; which thing God himself had positively forbidden, *Lev. 18. 18. Thou shalt not take a Wife to her Sister, to vex her or uncover her Nakedness*; meaning, that they should not add one Wife to another, to vex and molest the first whom they promis'd to love and cherish.

As for what is alledg'd of the many Wives of the Patriarchs, that was either an Indulgence granted in the beginning of the World for the peopling of it, or else must be reckon'd among the Failings of those good Men, which are not to be excus'd or imitated. In the New Testament, we find our Saviour blaming the Jews for the liberty they took in the matters of Polygamy and Divorce: to rectify which, he sends them to the first Institution of Marriage, and tells them, *that in the beginning it was not so*, declaring it to be *Adultery to put away a Wife and marry another*: and therefore it must be more so, whilst they have one, to take another, which must be attended with those Brawls, Heart-burnings, and Confusion, that must destroy the Peace of Families, and render it impossible for one House to hold them: for which reason, the Apostle advises in the singular number, *Let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Husband*.

2. Concubinage is here compriz'd and condemn'd under the Sin of Adultery; which is the adding of a Concubine to a Wife, or, in the modern Phrase, the keeping of a Miss. This is indeed a Vice of an antient Date, which hath been unhappily reviv'd and pleaded for by the Debauchees of latter Ages,

Ages, tho it be contrary likewise to the first Institution of Marriage, which was the joining of one to one, to whom they were so to cleave, as to become but one Flesh; whereas Concubinage mars this Unity, and breaks down all the Enclosures of Wedlock, for 'tis a cleaving not to one but many, and divides the one Flesh into more: yea, 'tis contrary to all the Ends of Marriage. For,

(1.) It contradicts that great End of it, in propagating Mankind by a holy and legitimate Offspring; whereas this fills the World with a spurious and adulterous Brood. Again,

(2.) It contradicts that End of it, which was for the mutual Help, Comfort, and Society of one another; whereas this destroys all conjugal Affection, and robs both Parties of the Assistance and Comfort they might have in each other: so that instead of a Help they become a Hindrance and Abhorrence to one another, and fill the Family with Feuds and Contention. Moreover,

(3.) It thwarts that End of Marriage, whereby it was ordain'd as a Remedy against Sin, and to avoid Fornication; whereas this Vice joins Fornication to Matrimony, and makes Men sin not only against the Remedy, but with it.

Lastly, This Sin is a manifest Breach of all the Vows and Promises of Marriage, wherein both Parties solemnly engage to forsake all others, and to be true and faithful to each other as long as they both shall live.

3. Another Sin contain'd and condemn'd under Adultery, is the detestable Vice of Incest, which is the approaching to those that are too near of kin; a Crime that defiles the holy State of Matrimony, and makes that which is in itself honourable, to become vile and abominable. If it be not against the Law of Nature, 'tis evidently against the Law of God, who hath expressly forbidden *to approach to any that are near of kin*, Lev. 18. 6. Besides which, 'tis against all the Rules of Prudence and Decency, which makes it abhor'd both of God and Man. The transplanting of Seeds and Vegetables hath been observ'd by Husbandmen to produce the most kindly Increase, which is a direction even from Nature not to mingle the same Blood, or to draw nigh to such as are too nearly ally'd. What the prohibited Degrees are, both of Alliance and Consanguinity, is upon Record in the 18th Chapter of *Leviticus*; which being confirm'd by the Authority of God, as well as the Decency of the

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the thing, have been adopted into the Laws and Canons of the Christian Church, which under the greatest Penalties hath condemn'd all such incestuous Mixtures. *St. Paul* commanded the incestuous *Corinthian* to be deliver'd up to *Satan* for the Punishment of the *Flesh*; that is, to be turn'd out of the Church by the Sentence of Excommunication; and to put away from among them that wicked Person: which shews the Heinousness and Scandal of this Vice, and how much it is to be shun'd and detested of all Christians. These are the Vices of a marry'd State prohibited in this Commandment. Beside which,

4. Under Adultery here is forbidden all Fornication, which is the Incontinence of single Persons; whereby they let loose the Reins to unbridled Lusts, and prostitute themselves to the vile Embraces of a Harlot. This, tho not altogether so bad as the former, it being a greater fault to sin with, and against the Remedy provided in this Case than without it; yet is a vile Enormity committed against the express Law and Will of God, who hath commanded to flee Fornication and all youthful Lusts, and to walk not after the *Flesh*, but after the *Spirit*: yea, this Sin (as the Apostle tells us) is committed against our own Bodies, which instead of being kept holy unto the Lord, are stain'd and polluted with filthy Lusts; whereby we unhallow those Temples of the Holy Ghost, and make the Members of Christ become the Members of an Harlot.

5. Under Adultery here is forbidden all the inward Uncleaness and Impurity of the Mind, tho it never come into outward Act; for God, who is the Judge and Searcher of Hearts, loves Purity and Truth in the inward Parts: *How long* (saith he to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*) *shall vain Thoughts lodge within you?* These as much defile a Man in the sight of God, as any external Uncleaness; for he that lusteth after a Woman, hath committed Adultery already in his Heart, *Mat. 5. 28.*

6. Here is forbidden all Lasciviousness or Wantonness of Behaviour, discover'd either by Gestures, Words, or Actions: The lascivious Eye, which appears in amorous and wanton Glances, call'd by *St. Peter*, *Eyes full of Adultery*, 2 *Pet. 2. 14.* The lascivious Tongue, which is delighted in obscene and filthy Communication, call'd therefore a World of Iniquity, *James 3. 6.* The lascivious Ear, that greedily listens to and receives such vain Communication, call'd therefore the Inlet of Vanity. The lascivious Hand, that

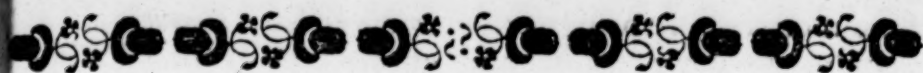
that is exercis'd in leud Actions and Embraces, and is therefore said to be the *Instrument of Unrighteousness unto Sin*, Rom. 6. 13. All these being the Agents and Instruments of Adultery, are forbidden in this Commandment.

But because where any Sin is forbidden, there all the Motives, Occasions and Incentives to it are forbidden with it; 'twill be requisite to mention some of those Temptations that lead to the Commission of this great Evil. And,

1st, Luxury, or an intemperate Use of God's Creatures, is an Incentive to Lust, and a great Occasion of the Evil here prohibited; for this adds Fuel to those impure Flames, and sets Men a burning in their Lusts one towards another. So we find God himself complaining of the *Israelites*, for abusing his Blessings to those wicked Purposes: *When I fed them to the full* (saith he) *they then committed Adultery, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots Houses; they were as fed Horses, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife*: Jer. 5. 7, 8. And what the Prophet *Jeremy* here ascribes to full Feeding, the Prophet *Isaiah* affirms likewise of high Drinking, telling us of some *that rose early in the Morning to follow strong Drink, and sitting late at Night till Wine inflame them*; Isa. 5. 11. meaning, that the immoderate Use of God's Creatures enkindles the Flames of Lust, and leads to all manner of Leudness: *Solomon* likewise tells the same, *Prov.* 23. 31, 33. which is too well known by sad Experience to need any other proof.

2^{dly}, Idleness is another great Inducement and Occasion of these Evils; for that exposes Men to all manner of Temptation, and carries them away with the Stream of evil Counsel and bad Examples. Hence we read of *Sodom*, that *Pride, Fulness of Bread, and Abundance of Idleness was in her*; Ezek. 16. 49. which the Prophet there assigns as the Cause of all the Evils both of Sin and Punishment that befel her. Besides these, there are,

Lastly, Many other Provocations to this Sin, as lascivious Dresses, embroider'd Hair, painting the Face, strange Apparel, lascivious Books and Pictures, leud Tales and Songs, and the like; all which being great Incentives to Lust, are to be look'd upon as prohibited in this Commandment: And the Apostle's Advice of *abstaining from all the Occasions and Appearances of Evil*, directs us carefully to watch against and avoid them.



DISCOURSE XVII.

EXOD. XX. 14.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

IN explaining the Negative Part of this Commandment, I shew'd the Incontinence both of marry'd and single Persons, and likewise all Impurity of Body and Mind, together with the Motives, Occasions, and Incentives thereunto, to be forbidden in it: I come now to the Affirmative Part of it, and to consider the Duty imply'd and requir'd in it.

And here the great thing enjoin'd by this Precept is Chastity, with all the good Means and Helps conducing thereunto. Now Chastity is a Virtue that preserves the Purity of Soul and Body from the Pollution of fleshly Lusts: Where, first,

I style it a *Virtue*, for so it has been ever justly accounted, and that both Moral and Theological. 'Tis a Moral Virtue, as taught by the Light of Nature, and practis'd by the wiser Heathens; and 'tis a Theological Virtue or Divine Grace, as 'tis adopted into Christianity, and made a great Part and Duty of Religion. Moreover,

I style it a *Virtue*, that preserves the Purity of Body and Soul; both which being liable to Defilement and Corruption, are purify'd and kept clean by this Virtue.

It preserves the Purity of the Body, by keeping it from all the outward Acts of Uncleaness, and making the Members of it, which by Leudness are only *Instruments of Sin*, to become the *Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness*. It sets a Guard upon the Eyes, and turns them away from beholding *Vanity*; it puts a Bridle upon the Tongue, that restrains it from all corrupt Communication, and keeps the Door of the Lips, that no Evil may enter in or come forth thence; it sets a Watch upon the Ear, that closes it against vain Discourse, and will not suffer it to listen to filthy Conversation; it guards the Hand, and keeps it from touching any unclean thing; yea it teaches us to pluck out

a right Eye, and cut off a right Hand, rather than either should offend; it being *better to enter into Heaven maim'd*, than to go down whole and entire into Hell. Lastly, it guides the Feet into the Ways of Purity, and keeps them from the Paths of Harlots, whose *House is the way to Hell, and whose Goings lead to the Chambers of Death*. Thus does Chastity preserve the Purity of the Body, by setting a Guard upon all the Senses, and securing all the Members of it.

It preserves the Purity of the Soul, not only by restraining the outward Acts, but by checking the internal Motions of Concupiscence; for it will not suffer vain Thoughts to lodge in the Mind, and much less to insinuate into the Affections, and least of all to form themselves into lustful Desires or Actions: it stifles the Sparks of Lust in the beginning, and that prevents their breaking out into a Flame. Thus does Chastity preserve the Purity of the Soul, by chasing away all evil Thoughts that would annoy and infect it; for which reason the Apostle exhorts all Christians to *abstain from fleshly Lusts, because they war against the Soul*. And this will lead to

The last thing in the Description of Chastity, which preserves the Purity of Body and Soul *from the Pollution of sinful Lusts*; for these, if cherish'd and gratify'd, mightily pollute both, and render them but so many Cages of Uncleanneſs. The indulging a carnal Appetite defiles the Beauty, and destroys the Strength of the Body; and not only so, but debases the Dignity, and decays the Glory of the Soul. In short, it defaces the Image of God in both, degrades from the Honour of Men, and sinks them beneath the Beast that perisheth: whereas Chastity is the best Preservative against all these Evils: for it maintains the Honour and Dignity of the Soul, and secures the Body from all Impurities; 'tis the best *Hyssop to keep us clean*, makes us *whiter than Snow*, and either prevents or purges away all the Defilement of Nature.

From this brief Description, we may discern the Nature, Excellence, and Usefulness of Chastity, which alone can help us to *live after the Spirit*, and to preserve the whole Man from the Danger and Defilements of the Flesh. This is what the Apostle styles, *Possessing our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 3, 4. meaning, the Vessels of our Bodies, which are to be kept pure and clean from carnal Lusts, that they may be *Vessels of Honour, fitted and prepar'd*

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prepar'd for our Master's Use; that is, to be the Mansions of his Holy Spirit, and the Temples of the Holy Ghost.

Now this excellent Virtue is to be observ'd and exercis'd thro' the several States and Stages of human Life. According to which,

1st, There is a Virginal Chastity, which appertains to single and unmarry'd Persons of both Sexes.

2^{dly}, There is a Conjugal Chastity, which belongs to Persons in a marry'd State and Condition.

3^{dly}, There is a Vidual Chastity, which concerns Persons of both Sexes in a State of Widowhood. In all which Stations, which many run thro', some Acts of this Virtue are to be carefully practis'd. For the

1st, In a virginal or unmarry'd State, 'tis certainly the Will of God that we abstain from Fornication, and learn to possess our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Lusts of Concupiscence, like the Gentiles that know not God. Virginity is a State of Purity, and therefore must not be stain'd or defil'd by any unlawful Embraces; to which end it must be guarded with Modesty, adorn'd with Piety, and secur'd by the frequent Exercises of Religion, and the Fear of God. Some of the Fathers have styl'd this, *the Life of Angels*, and *the Condition of glorify'd Saints in Heaven*; others have recommended it as a great Help and Ornament of Religion, which from its greater Freedom from Cares, affords greater Advantages and Opportunities of Devotion: Such therefore should use and improve the Conveniences of that State to those Ends, that they may be the better guarded against the Importunity of sensual Lusts, and the many Temptations that may assault them. And tho it be no Offence against the Purity of this Virgin State, to take a fit Opportunity of changing it for the honourable State of Matrimony; yet they must keep themselves pure and un- stain'd till the Season offers; and, with *Job* in another case, wait with Patience and Purity till the Change comes: which will be more successful and happy, when Men behold their *chaste Conversation coupled with Fear*.

2^{dly}, For Persons in a marry'd State, there is a Conjugal Chastity incumbent upon them: And that consists,

(1.) In a strict Observation of their Marriage Vow and covenant, in which they promis'd to *forsake all others, and keep only to each other whilst they both shall live*. Hereby both Parties stand solemnly engag'd not to suffer their Affections to stray from one another, nor to run after

strange Flesh ; but to confine their mutual Kindness within due Bounds, and to be true and faithful to each other to their Lives end.

(2.) In such a moderate Use of lawful Pleasures, as may be most consistent with the Glory of God, and the Health and Comfort of one another: The Apostle wills them to *abstain by Consent at some times, that they may the better give themselves to Prayer and Fasting*, 1 Cor. 7. 5. And ver. 29. he bids *those that have Wives, be sometimes as tho they had none*. And that because the time is short, and all sensual Pleasures will soon have an end ; therefore he would not have us to be too fond or immoderate in the Use of them, but to make all the transitory Delights of this Life serviceable to the more durable and desirable Joys of a better.

3dly, For those that are in a State of Widowhood, there is a vidual Chastity that appertains to them ; and this contains in it sundry Acts and Duties: As,

(1.) The paying all decent Offices and Solemnities due to the Memory of the deceas'd Party, not forgetting them too soon, nor running too hastily into the Embraces of another ; for this betrays a Coldness of Affection, and too great an Unconcernedness for the loss of so near and dear a Relation: Beside, the Apostle seems to charge such Widows with Lightness and Wantonness, 1 Tim. 5. 11. where he does not condemn all second Marriages, but a light, vain, and wanton running into them.

(2.) Widows from the Sense of Mortality, which they have had in the loss of so tender a Part, should learn to wean themselves from the World, and rather prepare to follow the former, than fly too hastily into the Arms of another Consort ; to which end they should not ruminate too much on past Pleasures, but consider present Sorrows, and labour to prevent future Troubles. The Apostle speaks of some Widows, that are *Widows indeed*, 1 Tim. 5. 3. describing them afterwards by their *trusting in God, and continuing in Supplications and Prayers day and night*, ver. 5. giving themselves unto God, and supplying the Desolateness of their Condition with fervent and frequent Devotion, whom he therefore counts worthy to be honour'd, lov'd, and reliev'd.

Lastly, Widows should carefully preserve an exemplary and unspotted Chastity, behaving themselves with that Decency and Modesty which becomes Women fearing God.

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Thus I have describ'd the Virtue of Chastity requir'd in this Commandment, with the several Acts and Properties of it, and the several States in which it is to be exercis'd.

But because where any Duty is injoin'd, there all the necessary Means and Helps are injoin'd with it; therefore 'twill be requisite to mind you of three or four Virtues, which are the necessary Helps and Preservatives of Chastity: and they are Diligence in our Calling, Temperance in Diet, Watchfulness, and Mortification in the whole Course of our Life.

1. Diligence in our Calling is here requir'd as a Preservative of Chastity: This prevents the Temptations of Lust, and makes us deaf to all Sollicitations thereunto. He that is diligently employ'd in the Business of his Vocation, will not be at leisure to listen to Satan's Suggestions, nor be led away by the corrupt Inclinations of the Flesh: For the Mind, which cannot attend to many things at once, being still exercis'd in the Business of a Calling, will leave no room for Sin to creep in. Idleness indeed lays Men open to all Temptations, it tempts the Devil himself to tempt us; it in a manner invites to Sin, and makes us ready to yield to any Lust that assaults us: whereas a Mind that is constantly well employ'd, cannot easily be employ'd amiss, and Vice must come with great force to overcome one that is arm'd with Business, and Courage to withstand it; for which reason we are often bid to mind the Affairs of our Vocation: *As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk,* 1 Cor. 7. 17. *Not slothful in Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord,* Rom. 12. 11. This will be a Remedy against Sin, and fortify us against the Assaults of all fleshly Lusts.

2. Temperance in the Use of God's Creatures is another Virtue requir'd in this Commandment, as a Preservative of Chastity: For as the Fire goes out when the Fuel is withdrawn, so will the impure Flames of Lust be extinguish'd when we withhold that which feeds them: and therefore we are bid to use God's Creatures not to excess, for that is apt to heighten and inflame, but to the Ends and Purposes for which God appointed them: *When I feed them to the full* (says God) *they committed Adultery,* Jer. 5. 7, 8. Which made *Agar* pray against Fulness, *lest he should forget himself, and say, Who is the Lord?* Prov. 30. 9. *He that striveth for Mastery* (saith the Apostle) *is temperate in*

all things, 1 Cor. 9. He that will get the Mastery of his Lusts, and conquer his Corruptions, must exercise the Virtue of Temperance, and abstain from all the Incentives to Uncleanneſs: this will ſtarve many a Vice, and quench the Fire that elſe will burn and conſume us. 'Twas our Saviour's Caution, *Take heed to yourselves, that ye be not overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs*, Luke 21. 34. and to avoid the Evils of Luſt and Lasciviouſneſs, we muſt beware of running into any Exceſs of Riot.

3. Watchfulneſs is another great Safeguard and Preſervative of Chſtity; for this arms us againſt all the Affaults of a carnal Appetite, and furniſhes us with ſufficient Force to repel them: They that keep a conſtant and ſtrict Guard, are more ſecure from the Danger of an Enemy, than they that neglect their Watch, and caſt off the Thoughts and Fears of him. The vain and careleſs Perſon is eaſily betray'd and carry'd captive by every Temptation; he is under the Command of Sin, and at the beck of every imperious Luſt; and therefore our Saviour charg'd all his Diſciples to *watch*: and leſt any ſhould forget or think themſelves exempted from it, he doubles the Charge, *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch*. And this is no more than is neceſſary, for the Fleſh is a home-bred Foe, that hath many ways to circumvent us; and as there are many things to tempt and ſollicit it without, ſo is it eaſily betray'd and ſeduc'd within: and therefore we cannot be too watchful againſt ſo cloſe an Enemy, that hath ſo many Wiles and Stratagems to betray us. And leſt all our Care ſhould be too little againſt this natural and inbred Foe, we are,

Laſtly, To call in the Aid and Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit to help us in this Combat; for ſo our Saviour directs us, *Watch and pray, leſt ye enter into Temptation*. Let us bring this unclean Spirit to our Saviour, to be exorcis'd by him when it is too hard for us; and becauſe the Fleſh is too apt to rebel againſt the Spirit; let us add Fasting to Prayer, keeping under the Body, and bringing it in Subjection to the Obedience of Chriſt; for this evil Spirit is not always to be caſt out without Prayer and Fasting.

Thus I have briefly ſhew'd you, both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment, that we may flee the one, and follow the other.

The things here forbidden, we ſee, are all the foul and beaſtly Sins of Uncleanneſs, ſome of which are not to be

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nam'd, and much less to be found among Christians; and all of them are so pernicious to the Peace and Welfare of Mankind, that wise Men may easily see sufficient reason to loath and detest them: for with what Baits or Allurements soever they may be presented to us, they are the Bane both of Body and Soul, and do but plague when they seem to please us; they wound us in things that are most dear to us, bringing Disgrace on the Name, Ruin to the Estate, and Rottiness in the Bones of them that practise them. In a word, they deprive Men of all Comfort here, and of all Peace and Happiness hereafter; for which reason *Solomon* truly said, *That he that committeth Adultery is void of Understanding*, Prov. 6. 32.

The thing here requir'd, is a pure and chaste Conversation, free from the Pollutions of the World, and hating the very Garments spotted with the Flesh; abstaining not only from the outward grosser Acts of Uncleaness, but from all inward and secret Desires after them. The Loveliness of which Virtue may be easily seen from the Loathsomness of the contrary Vice; for whereas this at once defiles and destroys the Body and Soul, the other is the Ornament, Glory, and Safeguard of both: and as Uncleaness tends to and prepares for Hell, the Habitation of evil unclean Spirits; so doth Chastity lead to and qualify for Heaven, the Mansion of Bliss and Purity.



DISCOURSE XVIII.

EXOD. XX. 15.

Thou shalt not Steal.

GOD Almighty having, in the two foregoing Precepts, guarded Mens Lives from Murder, and their Wives from Adultery; in this he secures their Goods from Theft and Rapine, and ties up Mens Hands from picking and stealing from one another: giving a particular Charge against it, and saying to every individual Person, *Thou shalt not Steal.*

In this Negative Precept we are again to consider, both what is condemn'd, and what is commanded by it.

In general; The thing forbidden in it, is all kind of Theft, or breaking in upon the Rights of another.

The thing commanded, is the permitting to all Men the quiet and undisturb'd Possession of all that is justly theirs.

And here we must note, that this Precept is grounded upon Property, and supposes Men may, and actually have a peculiar Right in some things which they may properly call their own. This Property is founded upon human Laws which allot to every Man his Portion; and where they are not contrary to, are confirm'd by the Laws of God: These are the Standard of Mens Rights, and ought to be the Rule and Measure of determining them.

And as this Precept supposes Property, so does it expressly prohibit all Violation of it, either by withholding from another what is justly due to him, or by taking from him what he is actually possess'd of; both which are plain Theft and Stealing from him.

But to speak more particularly; the Stealing forbidden in this Commandment, is either Open, or Secret. Of the first kind, are Robbery and Oppression; of the latter, all private Pilfering, and Deceit in Trade: the former is Stealing by Force, the latter by Fraud; both which are direct Breaches and Violations of this Law.

1st, Then, all Robberies and forcible Invasions of another's Substance, either Money or Goods, are here plainly forbidden; this is stealing with a high Hand, and a brazen Forehead, adding Impudence to Theft, and is frequently attended with Violence and Bloodshed. 'Tis a Crime too well known and felt by sad Experience, to need any Description or Proof: the Highways abounding too much with such Monsters, who, like Factors for the Devil, go to and fro seeking whom they may devour; and like Beasts of Prey hunt after Game, and then retire to their Dens. Of this kind likewise is all Burglary and House breaking, which molests and rifles Mens Habitations, and is a manifest Invasion of all Right and Property: both which fly in the Face of this Commandment, and bid direct Defiance to all the Laws of God and Man.

2^{dly}, Another Sin here prohibited is Oppression or Extortion: This is stealing with Authority, or an avow'd piece of Robbery, whereby Might (as we say) overcomes Right.

Right; and Power, which was given for Protection, is made an Instrument of Ruin: of this kind, are grinding the Faces of the Poor, withholding the Hire of the Labourer, perverting Justice by Bribes, extorting unjust Fees, and the like; all which are plain Theft, Men being robb'd of all that is either detain'd of their Due, or extorted from them without Right. And tho this may be sometime done under a Colour of Law, yet that does not lessen, but rather aggravate the Oppression, by using that to the destroying of Property, which was design'd to defend it. These are the more open and publick ways of Stealing; beside which, there are other more close and secret Methods of Theft, as private Pilfering, and Deceit in Trade, which are likewise here forbidden.

1. I say, all secret Pilfering and Purloining from another is here condemn'd, whether it be of Money or Goods, or any thing that is his: this is too common a Practice among many, to take away what they can from others; and if they can escape Discovery, and keep out of the Clutches of the Law, care not what wrong they do them, going off with the Spoils of their Neighbour, and, with the adulterous Woman, *wiping their Mouth, and saying they have done no Evil.* To which end,

Some take the advantage of the Night, and at once act and hide their Theft under the Covert of Darknes.

Others take the opportunity of a Neighbour's Absence, to sile and diminish his Substance.

Others again take the opportunity of Throngs and Crouds to pilfer and steal, which is the Practice of Pickpockets and jugglers.

Again, There is another sort that are exercis'd in receiving, concealing, and vending stolen Goods, making Markets of their Neighbours, and receiving Gain from what belongs not to them. These and many more are the Arts and Practices of the secret Thief, who gets his Living not so much by the Sweat of his Brow, as by the Slight of his Hand.

2. All Fraud and Deceit in Trade is here compris'd as an Act of Stealing; this, as manag'd by too many, is a Mystery of Iniquity, full of Falshood and Deceit, and has too many Intrigues to be known or describ'd by any but those that use them. As,

(1.) Some defraud in the Substance of the Commodity they deal in, selling one thing for another, as Water for Wine,

Wine, Chaff for Wheat, and the like, of which we read *Isa. 1. 22.* and *Amos 8. 6.* This is but too common to put off false and counterfeit Ware, or such as are mingled and blended with other things; which is no better than plain Theft or Stealing: for he that by falsifying or disguising a Commodity skews more than 'tis worth out of another's Pocket, does no better than pick it, and the Buyer is robb'd of all that is taken above the just Value.

(2.) Others defraud in the Qualities of the Goods they deal in; for tho' the thing sold be true as to the Kind and Substance of what it was sold for, yet it may have many Defects and bad Qualities, which if not discover'd to, or discern'd by the Buyer, a great Fraud or Wrong may be done to him: therefore if any sell a Commodity for sound and good, which he knows to be faulty; or if he declare not the Faults to the Buyer, and abate for them accordingly, he is a plain Cheat, for he makes him pay for something which he hath not, and buy those good Qualities that are not there: which is downright Theft or Stealing from our Neighbour.

(3.) Others again defraud in the Quantity of the Goods they deal in, and that is done by false Weights and Measures, which is likewise no better than Stealing: for he that sells less than Weight, makes the Buyer pay for that which he hath not; and he that useth false Weights and Measures, withholds from another so much as the Weight and Measure falls short of the due Proportion: and therefore we find a strict Charge against it, *Deut. 25. 15, 16.* The Prophet *Amos* complains of some that *made the Ephah small, and the Shekel great, falsifying the Ballance with Deceit.* *Amos 8. 5.* And *Solomon* more than once tells us of false Weights and Measures, that they are an Abomination to the Lord, *Prov. 11. 1.*

(4.) Others defraud in the manner of uttering their Goods and Commodities; not only concealing their Faults, but extolling them above their Worth, and commending them for those Qualities that are not in them; taking advantage likewise of the Ignorance, the Necessities, and the Fondness of Chapmen, to put the Dice upon them, whereby they make them pay for their Follies, and sell the Wants and Infirmities of their Brethren; which is arrant Theft or Stealing.

3. All falsifying in Trusts, Bargains, and Contracts, are forbidden in this Commandment. He that is intrusted for another

another, robs him of all that of which he gives not a fair Account, or is dispos'd of contrary to his Interest or Will. So likewise all Bargains and Contracts transfer a Right to the things promis'd and agreed to; and therefore to falsify or act contrary to them, is to deprive them of a just Due, and consequently to steal from them.

But beside the foremention'd ways of Stealing, there is yet a worse kind of Theft than all these, forbidden in this Commandment, known by the Name of Sacrilege, which is the robbing of God, or proving deceitful to our Maker. If you ask how this is done, God himself answers it, *Mal. 3. 8. Ye have robbed me in Tithes and Offerings.* This is a peculiar Right, which God, who giveth all things, hath reserv'd for himself, and appropriated to the Maintenance of those that serve at the Altar; so that to falsify or detain any part of this, is to commit Robbery against God, and to steal from our Maker. How heinous and provoking a Sin this is, I shall not need to say; since God himself declares, that he will not only punish private Persons for this Sacrilege, but will curse whole Nations, and that with a double and deplorable Curse too, where it reigns, *Mal. 3. 5.*

Lastly, The last, tho none of the least Sins forbidden in this Commandment, is the Sin of Uncharitableness, or withholding Alms from the Poor; for these are not barely a Gift, but a Debt due to the Indigent and Needy, by a Right transfer'd and settled on them by the great Proprietor and Landlord of the World; and to withhold it from them in cases of extreme Want and unavoidable Necessity, is one of the worst sorts of Stealing.

These are the main things condemn'd in this Commandment; and since by the former Rule, where any Sin is forbidden, there all the Degrees, Steps, and Occasions of it are forbidden with it; I must here consider some of the chief Occasions and Temptations to these enormous Evils. And here the

First and great Cause of these Sins is an inordinate Love of the World, which the Apostle tells us *is the Root of all Evil*; and particularly of all that Fraud, Sacrilege, and Injustice that is to be found in it: for Men that set their Hearts too much upon the World, care not how they come by it; and this will prompt them to break down all the Inclosures of Right, and to invade the Properties of one another.

2dly,

2dly, Idleness is another great occasion of Stealing; for such as refuse to labour in some Calling to get an honest Livelihood, will not fail to reach out their Hands in picking and stealing from others: and, like the idle Drones, will live upon the Labours of the more industrious Bees: and therefore as this Sin is forbidden in the preceding Commandment as an Incentive to Lust and Debauchery, so is it condemn'd in this as an apparent Cause of Theft and Robbery.

3dly, Discontent with our present Condition is another frequent occasion of Stealing; for they that are dissatisfy'd and uneasy in their own State, will be ready to mend it by the unjust Methods of Rapine, Violence, and Oppression, and as opportunity offers, will help themselves by the Spoils of their Neighbour.

Thus we see the several Acts of Injustice, or ways of stealing, forbidden in this Commandment, together with the Motives and Occasions of them; it remains that I shew something of the Evil and Danger of them, the better to dissuade and deter from them.

(1.) The Evil of them plainly appears in this, that they are a manifest Violation of the Laws of God and Man; for both of them have, by the strictest Precepts and Prohibitions, warn'd and caution'd us against them. Yea, they are contrary not only to the Rules of Reveal'd Religion, but to the common Principles of Nature and Reason, which forbid any Wrong or Injury to be done to any, and not to do that to others, which we would not have done to ourselves. Now there is none that would willingly have his House plunder'd, his Goods purloin'd, or his Property either openly or secretly invaded; and if we would but consider and act by that common Dictate of Nature, of doing as we would be done by, we should soon see the Sinfulness of all such Practices, and be sufficiently arm'd against all Temptations to them. Beside,

These Sins are destructive to the Peace and Welfare of Mankind; for they will not suffer Men to enjoy their own, or live quietly by one another, they deprive them of all the Comfort of their Labours, and defeat all the Rewards of Industry: so that Thieves and Robbers are the Pests of a Commonwealth, and the Bane of all human Society. Then,

(2.) For the Danger, that is evident from the Punishments annex'd to these Offences both by divine and human Laws;

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Laws; the one making temporal, the other eternal Death the Reward of them. The craftiest Thief and the stoutest Robber are often caught in their own Snare, and they who drive a Trade in this Wickedness, seldom miss at last of the Reward of it.

But if any should be so fortunate in these sinful Courses, as to escape earthly Punishments, he shall unavoidably fall under future and eternal Vengeance; for the Apostle assures us, that God is the Avenger of these things, *1 Thess.* 4, 6. And this he doth,

Sometimes by scattering all such ill-gotten Substance. Money gotten by Fraud and Oppression, like Quick-silver, slides thro' the Fingers of those that hold it fastest; and an invisible Hand takes away that which hath been unjustly taken from another: so God himself threatens, *Habb.* 2. 6, 7, 8. *Wo be to him that increaseth that which is not his, that ladeth himself with thick Clay! for those shall rise that shall trouble him, and awake that shall vex him: because he hath spoiled others, the Remnant of the People shall spoil him.* Moreover, sometimes God avenges these things by blasting the Comfort of what continues with them, and mingling a Curse with all that they possess: a little ill-gotten Goods like Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, diffusing itself, and corrupting the whole Mass; this, like a Moth or a Canker, eats out the Sweetness of what they have, and embitters all with the Sting of an evil Conscience.

But beside secret Remorse within, this Sin is aveng'd with Shame and Ignominy from without, which renders them vile and odious in the sight of God and Man. The petty Thief is commonly branded and known from others by the Marks of Infamy, which if they prevail not to their Reformation, lead to farther Degrees of this Wickedness, which bring on Ruin and an untimely End: *For the bloody and deceitful Person shall not live out half his Days,* *Psal.* 55. 23. and *Solomon* tells us, that *the Robbery of the Wicked shall destroy them,* *Prov.* 21. 7. Thus is God the Avenger of these things here in this World: But the forest part of his Vengeance is reserv'd for hereafter, when the Black Bill of all their Frauds and Injustice shall be brought in against them; when the Cries of the Hireling and Labourer, oppress'd in their Wages, will enter into the Ears of the Lord of Hosts, and the Rust of all ill-gotten Substance witness against them: then will they receive the Wages of their Unrighteousness, and be not only excluded from the Regions

Regions of Light and Glory, but doom'd, with the damned Crew of such Harpys, to the Dungeon of eternal Horror and Darknes.

Wherefore in the last place, let all Men beware of this Sin of Stealing, which is attended with so many doleful and unspeakable Evils: 'tis the Apostle's Advice, *Let no Man defraud or go beyond his Brother in any matter,* 1 Theff. 4. 5. Do not disquiet thy Conscience with any unjust Gain, nor defile thy Fingers with such filthy Lucre; remembering that whilst thou art over-reaching thy Brother, Satan is all the while over-reaching thee; and whilst thou art purloining another's Substance, the Devil is pursuing and running away with thy Soul, the Loss of which is far more valuable than the Gain of the whole World.

DISCOURSE XIX.

EXOD. XX. 15.

Thou shalt not Steal.

I Discours'd the last time of the Negative Part of this Commandment, and shew'd what was forbidden by it: I proceed now to the Positive Part, to let you know what is commanded in it.

And here, as the invading of any Man's Property by Force or Fraud, and depriving him of any thing that by the Blessing of God or his own Industry is justly his, is the thing condemn'd by this Law; so the preserving him in his Rights, and permitting every one quietly to possess and enjoy their own, is the thing requir'd and settled by it. And therefore,

The first and great thing enjoin'd by this Commandment is Justice, Honesty, and Fair-Dealing between Man and Man; and this consists not only in doing no wrong to any, but in doing right to all: this Virtue not barely restrains Men from withholding what is another's, but inclines them to give every one their just Dues. To this we have many Precepts in Holy Scripture; *to have our Conversation honest among the Gentiles,* 1 Pet. 2. 12. *to render to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute, Custom to whom Custom, Honour* to

to whom Honour; owe no Man any thing, but to love one another: Rom. 13. 7, 8. There are some things due by the Law of God, whose is the Earth and the Fulness thereof, and by whose Grant the Children of Men enjoy it; there are Dues likewise by the Laws of Men, which allot to every one their Portion, upon which foot generally stand the Rights of Mankind; and there are some Dues granted and confirm'd by both, as the tenth part of our Substance, which are the Portion of the Priests, by the Laws of God and Man: these are all to be strictly and inviolably observ'd, rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. In a word,

Whatever Debts we have contracted, either by buying, borrowing, bargaining, or any other way engaging for our selves or others, must be justly and faithfully discharg'd, without diminution or delay; this is manifestly imply'd in this Commandment, which is grounded upon the fundamental Law of Equity, and is carefully to be kept to in all our Dealings.

2dly, Here is imply'd likewise the permitting to all Men the quiet Enjoyment of all their Possessions, without depriving or disturbing them in any part of them: this is the Apostle's meaning, when he wills all Men to live quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty; and elsewhere, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all Men.* The sense of which is, that we should molest no Man in his just Rights, nor any way lessen his Substance, but suffer every one to sit quietly under his own Vine, and peaceably reap the Fruits of it.

Now because the enjoining of any Duty contains in it all the necessary Means and Helps tending thereunto, we are to look upon those Virtues that are requisite to promote Honesty, and quiet Living by one another, to be enjoin'd with it. And they are these following:

1. Labour and Diligence in some Calling. This was requir'd in the foregoing Precept as a Preservative of Chastity, and a necessary Means to prevent Leudness and Debauchery, which Idleness unavoidably leads Men to: and the same is requir'd in this Commandment as a Preservative of Honesty, and a necessary Means to prevent Poverty and Stealing, which Idleness exposes many to: *Let him that stole, steal no more* (saith the Apostle) and to that end advises to labour, *working with his Hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*; Eph. 4. 28.

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They that will not put forth their Hands to work, do commonly reach them out to steal; whereas they that labour in an honest Calling, not only keep off Poverty from themselves, but are enabled to relieve the Necessities of others. But because our Labour, without the divine Assistance, will be but a slender Relief either to ourselves or others, here is requir'd,

2. Prayer unto God for his Blessing upon it, which alone can give it the desir'd Success; this will discover such a dependence upon God, and such a sense of his Ability and Readiness to help us, as will engage the divine Providence, and secure us from all the Dangers and Miseries of Want: *for tho the Lions may lack, and suffer Hunger, yet they that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good*, Psal. 34. 10. The true Reason that many do not prosper, is, either that they cast off all due Care of their Affairs, or call not upon God for his Blessing upon them; and where these things are neglected, 'tis no wonder if they sink into Want and Poverty: *for 'tis the Blessing of God that maketh Rich*, and preserves from the Temptations of Poverty; and 'tis Prayer alone that procures this Blessing, and protects from all the Evils and Dangers of it. Hence we find *Agar* not only labouring but praying against Poverty, *Lest I be poor* (saith he) *and steal*, Prov. 30. 9. and desiring to be *fed with Food convenient for him*. And our blessed Saviour, in his excellent Form, hath directed us to add Prayer to our Labours, and every day to ask *our daily Bread*: Where, tho we are directed to call and depend upon God for a Subsistence, yet we are no way encourag'd to pray for Abundance, to feed our Luxury, or spend upon our Lusts; but only to ask our daily Bread, and to be fed with Food convenient for us.

3. Another Virtue necessary to preserve Honesty and prevent Stealing, is Contentedness with our Condition: for this will keep us from envying the Prosperity, or invading the Rights of other Men; whereas he that is not satisfy'd with his present State will never think that he hath enough, and that will tempt him to break in upon others, and to feather his Nest with the Spoils of his Neighbour: and therefore the Apostle wills all Men *to be content with such things as they have*, without casting an evil Eye, or reaching out a purloining Hand after that which is another's. As for himself, he tells us, that he had *learnt in whatever State he was, therewith to be content*; he knew how to want, and was thereby

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thereby arm'd against the Temptations to Theft and Envy; and he *knew how to abound*, and was thereby enabled to avoid the abusing himself and God's Creatures by the Evils of Luxury and Intemperance; and in every Condition he had attain'd that Art of Contentment as to be not only easy, but thankful: which Lesson he recommends to us, and would have us learn from him, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. Not that we are restrain'd from bettering our Condition, where it may be honestly and fairly done, but that we do not use any foul or indirect Arts to compass it, by seeking to mend ourselves by marring of others, or build our own Fortunes upon the Ruin of other Men.

But this Virtue of Contentment will fall in more properly under the tenth Commandment, where it shall be farther handled.

4. Here is requir'd the great Virtue of Charity to the Poor and Needy, which God the Giver of all things hath made due to them: not indeed to the able, lusty and idle Beggars, who are to be made to labour, and get their own Bread; but to the aged, impotent and decrepid Poor, whom Sickness or other unavoidable Accident or Necessity hath cast upon us: to these our Alms become a Debt, which as Justice requires to pay, so shall we be not only unjust, but unfaithful in detaining it.

Lastly, Another great Duty requir'd in this Commandment is that of Restitution, the best Remedy and Expedient both against the Act and the Guilt of Stealing; which being of so great consequence to the present Peace and future Happiness of our Souls, I shall briefly shew the Nature, Necessity, and Usefulness of this Virtue.

For the Nature of Restitution, 'tis that Act of Justice which consists in repairing of Injuries, or making Satisfaction for the Wrong done to any. Where I style it,

1. *An Act of Justice*, and so it is; for if Justice requires the rendring to all their due, then we may neither take, nor keep from another what is his. He that knowingly withholds any thing from the right Owner, is a Thief and a Robber; and as the first taking it away was an Act of Injustice, so is the keeping of it no less in every Instant of the Possession: so that the same Justice that forbids the taking away any thing from our Neighbour, requires the restoring of it where any such thing is done; for which reason, Restitution is reckon'd an Act of Justice.

2. I style it that Act of Justice, which consists in *repairing Injuries and Wrongs*; for the clearing whereof, we are to observe in the Act of Stealing,

1st, The Affront done to God, by breaking of his Law. And

2^{dly}, The Injury done to Man by invading of his Property.

To the repairing of the first, Repentance is necessary, whereby alone we can obtain Pardon of God whom we have offended, and by Acts of Justice and Mercy atone for the Violation of his Laws.

To repair the latter, we must restore the thing taken away from another, or make him an equal and due Satisfaction; taking off all the evil we have brought upon him, and not suffering any to groan under the burden of our Injustice, which is against all the Rules of Equity and Charity.

But here it may be ask'd,

1. Who are they that are thus to make Restitution? To which the answer is, all that have willingly wrong'd any Person, and either by force or fraud hurted his Neighbour; yea, not only they that have done this in their own Person, but all that have counsel'd, assisted, or any way promoted the doing of it, are likewise bound to Reparation: for these being all Actors and Abettors of the Wrong, are to be Sharers in the Satisfaction. But,

2. Of what things is this Restitution to be made? Why, of all that which of right belongs to another, and was unjustly taken or kept from him; all that is borrow'd or receiv'd of him must be return'd; all that is intrusted or committed to our Care must be accounted for: In a word, every thing of another's, that is in our keeping, whether by the lawful ways of Loan or Trust, or the unlawful ways of Fraud and Injustice, must be restor'd to him; if the thing be lost or perish'd, then the Value of it, with all the Fruits and Profits accruing by it; and Satisfaction is to be made for all the damage of detaining it. But,

3. To whom is this Restitution to be made? Why, to the Party wronged, for common Reason directs the Satisfaction where the Injury was sustain'd: If the Party be deceas'd, then to the Heirs to whom the Right descends; but if these cannot be found, then to God Almighty the Lord of all, who hath transfer'd this Right on the Church and Poor, whom

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whom he hath made his Receivers in this Case, as appears by the Grant which himself hath made of it, *Numb. 5. 8.* If he that hath done any *Trespas*, hath no Kinsman to receive the recompence of the *Trespas*, then let the *Trespas* be recompens'd unto the Lord, even to the Priest who shall make Atonement for him. And for the Poor, Christ himself declares, that whosoever shall do it to one of these, does it unto him; *Mat. 25. 45.* by which we are directed where Restitution is to be made in all Cases.

If it shall be ask'd here concerning the quantity, How much is to be restor'd? I answer, all that hath been unjustly gotten or taken away; the whole damage must be repair'd, and all the wrong done must be satisfy'd for: this, common Justice and Equity exact from us, which will us not to leave our Neighbour worse than we found him; we are to do him all the good we can, but not the least Harm or Injury: if any be done either wilfully or unadvisedly, full Reparation must be made to the utmost of our Power and Knowledge, that no Cry of Oppression may come against us, nor any have just cause to complain of our Injustice. Restitution then must be intire, and reach to the least Mite of unjust Gain; and where that is difficult to be known by reason of the multiply'd Acts of Fraud, there we are to return rather more than less, and be sure to exceed rather than come short of Satisfaction. This we find was the Practice of penitent Sinners in this matter: *Zackeus* restor'd fourfold, and so did *St. Matthew* and the other Publicans, who had defrauded by their Exactions; and all that will find Mercy, must go and do likewise.

But here it may be farther ask'd concerning the manner of Restitution; Whether it must be done by the Party himself that did the Wrong, or whether it may be done by another in his stead? As also, whether the Reparation must be publick, or whether it may suffice if the Wrong be privately repair'd? To which I answer, that if the Wrong done to any be notorious and publick, so as great Offence may be given or taken by it, 'twill be expedient that the Restitution be made by the Person himself who did the Wrong; and that as publickly too, if it conveniently may be, as the Injury, to prevent the Evil and Contagion of so bad an Example: otherwise, if the Damage be secret, a Man may provide for his own Credit, and secure a good Conscience, if he restore that privately by a Friend which was secretly taken away. Tho in other Cases, I dare not pronounce a

private Restitution insufficient, presuming that where 'tis honestly and intirely made, it will be accepted both of God and Man.

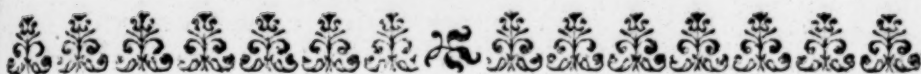
But there is one scruple more, about the Time or Season of Restitution; When it is to be made? in answer to which, I say, it must be done presently, without delay: as soon as the Mind is touch'd with the sense and remembrance of the Wrong, it must be eas'd and reliev'd with all speed; for otherwise the Sin and the Trouble too will continue and encrease, so long as the Restitution is defer'd: *Say not to thy Neighbour (saith Solomon) Go thy way, and come again to morrow, and I will give thee; when thou hast it by thee: Prov. 3. 27.* Which Advice is good, not only as to ordinary Debts, but is chiefly so as to Wrongs; the repairing whereof may not be put off by delays, but must be done out of hand.

This is the Nature, let us next consider the Necessity of Restitution; and this is so necessary, that without it the Curse of God will enter into and corrupt all we have; like a Moth it will eat thro' and devour all our Substance, and these ill-gotten Goods like undigested Morfels will turn to Gall and Wormwood in the Belly: beside, the Sin of Theft will not be forgiven till the thing stolen be restor'd; 'twill still lie as a load upon our Mind, and make our Reckoning heavy; yea, the Guilt and Rust of it will rise up and witness against us at the last Day, when all ill-gotten Treasure shall be melted down about us, and torment us with unquenchable Flames.

Neither is the Danger of unrepair'd Wrongs greater than the Comfort and Happiness of Restitution; for this will make us easy here, and eternally happy hereafter. *Zachens* had *Salvation come to his House that very day* that he perform'd this; and our Saviour hath assur'd us, that they who now *restore fourfold, shall receive more than a thousand-fold in the World to come.*

Thus we see what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment: both which teach us to avoid the doing any wrong to our Neighbour, or if we have done any, to make all due Satisfaction for the wrong we have done.

To conclude then, *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour in an honest Calling, that he may be enabled to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with God.*



DISCOURSE XX.

EXOD. XX. 16.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.

THE foregoing Precepts take care for the Security of Mens Persons and Possessions, and are given to preserve both from all Violence and Wrong; this provides for their good Name, and designs to guard it from Slander and Defamation. Indeed a good Name is so dear and desirable a thing, that the very Subsistence of some, and the Comfort and Conveniencies of all Men depend very much upon it. The Wise-Man tells us, that *'tis rather to be chosen than great Riches*, which will afford but little Comfort without it, *Prov. 22. 1.* And elsewhere, *a good Name is better than precious Ointment*, *Eccles. 7. 1.* for it yields the sweetest savour to all that are round about us, and not only perfumes the Air we breathe in, but scatters its Fragrancy abroad, and transmits the Odour to Posterity.

And as this is a very desirable, so it is a very tender thing, that is easily wounded, and the Wounds made in it, how unjustly soever given, prove many times incurable, the Malignity of them spreading farther than any Plaister can reach. For which reasons this Commandment was given, to guard it from all unjust Assaults that may be made upon it, in these words, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*

This Precept is likewise Negative, and therefore we are first to learn what is forbidden by it, which in general are all the ways of hurting the Credit and Reputation of our Neighbour; and these are sometimes more open, and sometimes more secret, both which are here plainly condemn'd by this Law. The more open ways are these following,

1. The bringing a false Accusation, or giving a false Testimony against any in Courts of Judicature: this is a wounding

ing of Mens good Name to the purpose, and seems to be condemn'd by the Letter of this Law ; and this may be done several ways. Either,

(1.) By charging any Person with what they do or may know to be false: such was that of *Potiphar's Wife*, who charg'd *Joseph* with Incontinence, when she knew he rejected all Motions towards it ; of which we read, *Gen. 39*. Of the same kind were the false Witnesses suborn'd by *Jezebel* against *Naboth*, to testify his *Blaspheming God and the King* ; of which we read, *1 Kings 21*. *David* complain'd that *false Witnesses rose up against him, laying to his Charge things that he knew not*. Such were they, who falsely accus'd our Saviour as an Enemy to *Cæsar*, and his Apostles as Troublers of the World, and turning it upside down. This, how common soever in the World, is a Work of the Devil, and they who practise it are the Children of that Wicked-one, and tread in the steps of the Accuser of the Brethren. Again,

(2.) This bearing false Witness implies not only the affirming of what was false, but the concealing of something that is true. The goodness or badness of Mens Actions depends very much upon the Circumstances that attend them ; and as all Circumstances must concur to a good Action, so the concealing of any one may mar and misrepresent it : A fair thing may look foul, by hiding that which recommends it ; and a foul thing may look fair, by concealing the blackness and deformity of it. He that kills another, tho in his own Defense, or in the Execution of Justice, may be condemn'd as a Murderer, if those alleviating Circumstances are not brought to light ; and great Injury may be done to Men, where any part of the Truth is conceal'd.

(3.) The affirming a thing with a higher degree of Assurance, than our Knowledge of it amounts to, comes under the Sin of bearing false Witness. Thus he that attests a thing as certain, which he believes only as probable, gives a false Testimony, because the thing he asserts or swears to, may, for ought he knows, be otherwise ; he gives his Evidence on uncertainties, and sticks not at wronging his Neighbour's Credit, or wounding his own Soul.

2. Another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour, is that of Lying ; which is all speaking of Untruths wittingly, and willingly, with a purpose to deceive. And this may be done,

Sometimes

Sometimes for the promoting of some Good either to ourselves or others, which is call'd an officious Lye.

Sometimes to the prejudice and detriment of both, and this is call'd a pernicious Lye.

Sometimes again, merely for Sport or Recreation; and this is known by the name of a merry Lye. All which being violations of Truth, and many ways impairing the Credit and good Name of one another, are forbidden in this Commandment, as *bearing false Witness against our Neighbour*: of this kind is all falsifying in our Words and Promises, which beside the damage it does to the Credit, is many other ways hurtful to Mankind. And therefore we have many strict Precepts against this vile Practice: *Lye not one to another*, saith the Apostle; and *putting away lying, speak every one Truth with his Neighbour*, Eph. 4. 25.

Now the Evil of Lying is apparent: for it perverts the end of speaking, which is freely and fairly to communicate our Minds to each other; whereas this robs our Neighbour of that Debt of Truth we owe him, and makes the Tongue, which was given for the Glory of God and the Good of one another, to become the Instrument of deceit and dishonour to both. And therefore our Saviour tells us, that *lying is of the Devil, who was a liar from the beginning, and the Father of it*. And they that delight in it, shall have their Portion with him in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone: for without are Dogs (saith the Apostle) and whatsoever loveth or maketh a Lye; Rev. 12. last.

3. Slandering is another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour; and this consists in raising or spreading any false Reports of him to the prejudice of his Fame or Welfare: this is too common a Fault among Men, who whet their Tongue like a Sword, and cut as a sharp Razor, wounding the Reputation of each other without Consideration and Remorse. And this is done,

(1) Sometimes by fixing black and infamous Characters on Men, to their Prejudice and Disparagement; which Bolts are too often shot, and fly too much about the World. We find our Saviour himself could not escape the Lashes of slandering Tongues, for he was branded for an *Impostor* and *Blasphemer*, a *Glutton*, a *Wine-bibber*, a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*: and his Apostles were styl'd *Seditious and Troublers of the World*: and 'tis but too common to fix the odious Titles of Proud, Covetous, Malicious, and the

like, upon Persons deserving a better Character.

(2.) Slandering is sometimes by forging Calumnies and evil Reports of another; when Men use their Wits in inventing Lyes and Stories, to the hurting of the Credit, and impairing the Interest of our Neighbour: In which the Devil, who hath his Name from a Calumniator, is ever ready to assist and encourage them.

(3.) This is done sometimes by spreading the Lyes and Stories invented by others: there are some who tho they do not devise evil Reports, do yet delight to receive and spread them; these do not come far short of the former, for what they want of Invention, they make up by their Diligence in divulging; and they differ no more than the maker of false Wares does from the seller or vender of them. And there are too many such brokers of counterfeit Wares, who deal in this vile Merchandize, and sell the Reputation of their Neighbour, which is a hellish Practice, that renders them odious both to God and Man: for which reason *Solomon* declares, that *he that uttereth Slander is a Fool*.

(4.) Detraction is another way of *bearing false Witness against our Neighbour*: this differs from the former in this, that Slander is a wrongful Imputation of some Vice, Detraction is a wilful lessening of another's Virtue; the former consists in charging some Evil upon him, the latter in undervaluing and obscuring the Good that is in them: both which impair the Fame, and lessen the Esteem of those that deserve better. This is likewise but too frequent a Practice, whereby worthy Persons are less prefer'd, and worthy Actions less persu'd, than they ought to be. If you observe it, you will find that when the Merits of any Person shine forth with a brighter Lustre than others, many will be busy to cast a Cloud upon them, and to sully the Glory of his best Actions: He is indeed a learned Man (saith one) but he knows it: He is a good Man (saith another) but he hath his Failings: 'Tis true (saith a third) he is a sober Man, but he is sour and cynical: it cannot be deny'd (saith a fourth) that he doth his Duty well, but he is close and covetous, and seeketh his own Gain. Thus does the Detractor pick out all the Flaws, and where he cannot find, will make Faults to lower the Fame of one that seems to mount above him; lessening all the Good, aggravating all the Evil, blaming the Principles, disparaging the Means, and perverting the end of all his Actions.

Now

Now this is directly opposite to that part of Charity which we call Candor and Ingenuity, for that inclines Men to commend the Virtues and good Qualities of another, to give every thing its due weight; 'tis unwilling to find faults, and instead of disclosing one, will cover a multitude of Sins; it gives all Persons and Actions their just Praise, and is so far from speaking, that it *thinketh no Evil*, 1 Cor. 13.

Whereas the Detractor loves to find flaws and blemishes in the best Things, and to derogate from the Praise of the worthiest Persons: he pries narrowly into them, to find out something to bespatter and diminish both, and is never better pleas'd than when his Arrows or bitter Words hit and wound the brightest Virtue: He is uneasy under the Commendation of others, as thinking it takes off from his own Worth, and seeks to raise his own Fame upon the Ruins of others. In a word, the Detractor, like some sort of Flies, delights to fasten on sore Places, and with others sucks Poison out of the sweetest Flowers.

4. Flattery is another way of bearing false Witness against our Neighbour; and this differs from the former, that whereas the Detractor takes off from another's Worth, the Flatterer adds too much to it, and so hurts his Credit as much in the Excess, as the other doth in the Defect. The Flatterer represents Persons and Things otherwise than they are, extolling some Persons far above their worth, and giving them higher Characters than belong to them, and likewise commending some Actions beyond their desert, and setting them in a brighter Light than they should: all which is bearing false Testimony, and giving wrong measures of Action. There are some who will celebrate those good Qualities in another, which they know are not in him, at least in that degree which the Parasite ascribes to him; and there are others, who, if they see one guilty of a Vice, will commend him for the contrary Virtue, and not barely conceal, but celebrate his Deformities: This is fulsome Flattery, and bearing false Testimony with a witness; yea, 'tis what the Prophet denounces a woe against, *the calling Evil Good, and Good Evil, the taking Light for Darkness, and Darkness for Light*. What gross Extravagancies of this kind some Parasites have run into, is too well known to relate; and what vile and notorious Evils may and have proceeded from it, is easy to imagine.

5. Judging and censuring our Brother, is another way of *bearing false Witness against him*. This we find frequently and severely condemn'd in Holy Scripture; *Judge not* (saith our Saviour) *that ye be not judged. Who made thee a Judge?* saith the Apostle. Not that the Office of a Judge to censure and condemn some Mens Wickedness is here question'd, or that we may not publish or testify their Crimes before earthly Tribunals; much less are we restrain'd from giving friendly Admonition and Reproofs to an erring Brother: but that we are not to judge any rashly, and without authority, being neither call'd to it as a Magistrate or Witness, nor acting in it as a friendly Admonisher; that we do not censure any without a Cause, or to promote bad Designs: much less are we to pass Sentence upon Mens Thoughts, that are out of our reach, or judge their final State, which belongs not to us. These things have a very bad influence upon our Neighbour's good Name, and are therefore to be shun'd by us.

Lastly, All Scoffing or scurrilous exposing any to Contempt is here condemn'd, as bearing false Witness against our Neighbour: for this is many times a great prejudice to the Name, and likewise to the Quiet and Interest of another: and therefore the Wise-Man tells us, *He that mocketh his Neighbour is void of Understanding*, Prov. 11. 12. meaning that he doth not well consider the damage he brings to him, nor the detriment he thereby draws on his Soul.

These are the more open ways of hurting our Brother's Credit, and are here forbidden, as *bearing false Witness against him*.

Beside which, there are other more secret ways of wounding another's Reputation, that fall under the Prohibition of this Commandment; as Backbiting, Whispering and Tale-bearing: And these, tho less observ'd, are by no means the less injurious; yea, they are oft-times the more dangerous by being the less seen, and work sore and incurable Evils before they are discern'd. These sort of Evil-speakers work like Moles under ground: and as Men may suffer more by the invisible hollowness of an Earthquake, than by the loudest blusters of a Storm; so the Credit of our Neighbour may receive deeper Wounds by the invisible Darts of secret Calumnies, than by the bolder strokes of open and publick Slanders.

Now Backbiting (to speak more particularly of them) is the speaking Evil of any behind his back; and this distinguishes

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quishes it from all the foremention'd ways of evil speaking, that whereas they are done before the Face, this is done behind the Back; which bites the more incurably, because it cannot be seen or prevented: an Enemy that comes behind and unawares being far more dangerous, than one that is in view and comes before the Face; against the former we may arm and defend ourselves, whereas the latter sets upon us naked and unprovided. And therefore we find the Backbiter in the black List of the greatest Sinners, *Rom. 1. 20.* and numbred with those that are to be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* whereas a good Man is describ'd to be one that backbiteth not his Neighbour, and is thereby fitted to ascend the Holy Hill, *Psal. 15. 3.*

Whispering is that sort of Backbiting, that consists in relating Mens failings in private, committing them to one another as a Secret, and willing them not to name the Author: this is an artificial, and withal a very malicious way of defaming, and many times goes farther, and makes deeper Impression than more open Calumnies; for he that is intrusted with this Secret, commonly obliges another with it, and so 'tis communicated from one to another, till it creep about like Infection, and leave the Party's Reputation wounded beyond any Redress or Cure. And therefore we find these Whisperers too reckon'd in the Catalogue of those that are given up to a reprobate Mind, and without Repentance shall never enter into the Kingdom of God, *Rom. 1. 30.*

Tale-bearing is somewhat a more open way of defaming, and signifies the telling Tales of others as a piece of News, and to find matter of Talk, which is many times done to the great prejudice of Mens good Names; and therefore God Almighty gave an Express Charge against it, *Levit. 19. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among the People:* the word in the Original is *Rachil*, which signifies a Trader in ill Reports and Stories of other Men; where we are bid to beware of driving that ill Trade, or going up and down with Tales of other Folk. This is what the Psalmist condemns in some, who sit and speak against their Brother, and slander their own Mother's Son; *Plal. 50.* whose words (the Wise-Man tells us) are as Swords, and wound even to the innermost parts of the Belly; *Prov. 20. 19. Prov. 26. 22. Prov. 12. 18.* These, beside the evil they do to Mens good Names, destroy the Peace and Quiet of the

the whole Neighbourhood ; for a *Tale-bearer stirreth up Strife, and separateth good Friends.*

Thus we see what is forbidden in this Commandment ; namely, all manner of Evil-speaking, both open and secret, to the prejudice of the Fame and Reputation of any other, which is some way or other to *bear false Witness against our Neighbour.*

But because all the Motives and Occasions of this Evil are forbidden with it, the Apostle in *1 Pet. 2. 1.* hath will'd us *to lay aside all Malice*, which whets the Tongue against one another ; *all Guile*, which tips it with Falshood and Diffimulation ; *all Hypocrisy*, which uses it to the disparaging of others, to set off themselves ; *all Envy*, which fours Mens Minds, and corrupts their Discourse of each other ; *all Evil-Speaking*, which breeds the Poison of Asps under the lips. In a word, let us lay aside all Pride, Self-interest, Garrulity, Faction, and whatever else may lead to Slander and Defamation.



DISCOURSE XXI.

EXOD. XX. 16.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.

I Shew'd in my last what was forbidden in this Commandment, to wit, all the ways of impairing the Credit and good Name of one another, together with all the Motives that occasion or lead to it. I proceed now to what is requir'd in this Commandment : And here the

First and Great Thing requir'd is the preserving the Honour and good Name of our Neighbour. This is what *St. Peter* means, when he wills us to *honour all Men*, *1 Pet. 2.* meaning that we are to be so tender of the Honour of every one, as instead of impairing, to do all we can to preserve and advance it. Now this Honour is founded upon some Excellency that is common to all Mankind ; for they have all the Image of God stamp'd upon them, which therefore

therefore requires a sutable Regard to be paid to it in the meanest Person: and tho some, by reason of their higher Station, their greater Parts and Power, may challenge higher Degrees of it, yet that common Nature, of which all are Partakers, hath some measure of Honour due to it, which is to tender the good Name of every one, and to preserve all Men as far as we may from Obloquy and Contempt; for *he that mocketh the poorest Man* (as Solomon tells us) *despises his Maker*. 'Tis a Contempt of God to vilify such as wear his Image; and we disparage ourselves in abusing those that are so nearly ally'd to us by an Affinity of Nature: whereas all such are to be honour'd for God's sake, and to be lov'd for our own. We are to be as tender of theirs as of our own Reputation, and instead of hurting, to heal the wounds that are made in it. If we see another suffer under a slander which we know to be false, we are oblig'd to appear in his defense, to assert and vindicate his abus'd Innocence, and to the best of our power wipe out such unjust Aspersions. This is imply'd in *not bearing false Witness*, and is a Debt we owe to the Reputation of all Men.

Secondly, Here is requir'd Truth in all our Words and Promises; for the *not bearing false Witness*, signifies our bearing true Witness, and that we are to have regard to it in all our Speeches: for the Psalmist describes a good Man to be one, *that speaketh the Truth from his Heart*, Psal. 15. 2. And this is to be done both in publick Courts of Justice, and likewise in all private Commerce and Conversation with each other.

1. I say, we are to speak the Truth from our Heart in all Courts of Justice, when we are summon'd to bear Witness for or against any. This is a matter of great consequence both to the Lives and Fortunes of Men, the Safety of which depends very much hereupon; and therefore the Oath administer'd upon such occasions, requires all Men to speak *The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth*.

They are to speak *the Truth*, without forging or falsifying in any matter, which perverts Judgment and Justice.

The whole Truth, without concealing any part out of favour or prejudice to either Party, which may hinder Justice, and occasion much wrong.

Nothing

Nothing but the Truth, without adding any doubtful and uncertain Conjectures, which may mislead the Hearers, and bring on a wrong Sentence. These are the Properties of a good Witness, upon whose Testimony Mens Lives and Estates depend; *A faithful Witness will not lye, or forge any thing, but a false Witness will utter Lyes*; Prov. 14. 5. And elsewhere, *He that speaketh Truth sheweth forth Righteousness, but a false Witness Deceit*, Prov. 12. 17. This is to be carefully minded by all that are call'd upon to give evidence in any Cause, that they confine their Testimony to Truth, and to such things only as they know to be so; for 'tis this that preserves the Publick Peace and Welfare, prevents Injustice and Wrong, and secures to us the Peace and Tranquillity of our own Minds: yea, this promotes likewise the Glory of God, for *Joshua bids Achan to give Glory to God by speaking the Truth in the matter of the Wedge of Gold, and the Babylonish Garment, which he had secretly purloin'd*; Josh. 7. 19. Indeed, God is glorify'd by speaking Truth, for that bespeaks not only a Sense of, and Reverence for his Attributes, but a Conformity to his Nature and Will, who is *Truth itself*, and *requires Truth in the inward parts*: whereas God is highly dishonour'd by bearing false Witness, which signifies the casting off all Love and Fear of him.

2. And as this Commandment requires Truth in Courts of Justice, so does it in all our Conversation and Commerce with each other, in which we are commanded to *Speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour*, Eph. 4. 25.

In all private Converse, our Saviour's Advice is, that *our Communication be Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay*; that is, in affirming and denying, and both of them in Truth, speaking of things as they are, without falsifying or forswearing: for these are of the Evil one, who was a Liar from the beginning and the Father of them; whereas *God is Truth*, and his People are styl'd *Children that will not lye*, that have a veneration for Truth, and in all their Words and Actions keep to it. Indeed, Truth is too sacred a thing to be prostituted or play'd away; 'tis the Cement and Safeguard of all Society, and must therefore be inviolably observ'd in all our Communication with each other; but especially in our Promises and Contracts, wherein our Speech must be according to our Thoughts, and agreeable to our Purposes and Resolutions, standing firm to our Promises, and doing according to all that hath gone out of our Mouth.

'Tis

'Tis this alone that answers the End of Speech, which was given as a means to convey our Mind and Meaning, and thereby to be the Instrument of Intercourse and Confidence in one another; so that he who useth his Tongue to the speaking of Truth, useth it as God hath appointed; whereas he that telleth Lies, contradicts the Design of Speech, and makes his Tongue the Instrument of Deceit and Mischief. Beside,

Truth is a Debt which we owe all to one another, every Man having a Right to have our Meaning truly transmitted to him by our Words, the Faculty of speaking being given to that end. So that whoever falsifies or equivocates with his Neighbour, does an Act of great Injustice, by depriving him of that Right of Truth, which God hath made due to every Man; and he *bears false Witness* to the purpose, who speaks one thing and means another. And therefore,

Thirdly, Another Virtue requir'd in this Commandment, is an honest Simplicity in all our Words and Actions. This empties the Heart of all evil Purposes and Designs against any, and fills it with strong Desires of doing good to all; by which means there is no opposition between the Words and the Thoughts, nor do the Actions run counter to either. He that designs mischief to another within, commonly disguises it by fair Speeches without, and so hides the Naughtiness of the Heart by the Flatteries and Falshood of the Tongue: whereas he that hath nothing but good wishes towards others, will never falsify in his Words; his Tongue will not vary from his Heart, nor his Actions from either, but a true Harmony and Concord will be found in them all. This is that *Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, in which all Men are directed to have their Conversation. And this consists,

1. In a Freedom from all Malice, the vilest and most venomous of all the Passions, styl'd therefore not only Wicked, but Wickedness itself; for so *Malitia* in *Latin*, and *Kakia* in *Greek* both signify: 'tis compounded of Anger and Hatred, but more dangerous than both, being join'd with a desire of doing mischief, and a delight in it when done. 'Tis a secret, subtle and mischievous Passion, having the Craft of the Fox mixt with the Cruelty of the Tyger; it fills the Heart with Gall, tips the Tongue with Falshood, and as *Solomon* describes it, will not suffer Men to sleep

till

till they have done evil, Prov. 4. 16. Whereas an honest Simplicity of Mind is free from all this; it desires all good, but designs no evil to his Neighbour; and tho it may have something of the Wisdom of the Serpent, yet it still retains the Innocence of the Dove, and will not harm any in Body, Goods, or Name.

2. The Simplicity here requir'd consists in a Freedom from all Guile, Hypocrisy, and Dissimulation: These things put false colours upon Mens Words and Actions, and make them appear to be what they are not, and that sets them upon using all their Art and Industry to maintain the disguise. They that steer their course by these Measures, look one way and row another, professing the greatest dearness when their Designs are most dangerous, and by fair Speeches colour over the foulest Actions. *David* complain'd of this in his time, that his greatest Enemies were those that pretended the greatest Friendship: 'Twas *not an open Enemy* (saith he) *that did me this dishonour, but my Companion, and my own familiar Friend, and they that eat of my Bread laid wait for me.* *Judas* came to our Saviour with *Hail Master! and kiss'd him, at the same time that he betray'd him.* And *St. Paul* was in great perils by false Brethren, who spake him fair, when they design'd him the greatest mischief. This is but too much practis'd in our days, wherein the antient Simplicity of our Fore-fathers is in a great measure lost, and Men are degenerated in Craft and Subtilty, laying snares in their Talk, and traps in all their Ways and Dealings with each other. This is directly contrary to the Simplicity requir'd in this Commandment, in which we are forbidden to *bear any false Witness*; but contrariwise, that all our Speeches should agree with our Minds, and our Works bear a true Testimony to our Words: to this purpose is that of *St. Paul*, *Let Love be without dissimulation,* Rom. 12. *St. Peter* propounds to us our Saviour's Example, *who did no Sin, nor was any Guile found in his Mouth.* *Nathanael* is commended for a true Israelite, *in whom was no Guile.* The Apostle wills us to *lay aside all Guile and Hypocrisy, and as new-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby*; removing all Gall out of our Heart, that no Guile may be found in our Tongue.

Lastly, The Simplicity here requir'd implies a freedom from all envying and evil-speaking, which the same Apostle therefore exhorts us to lay aside. For Envy sours Mens Minds, and imbitters their Tongues against each other:

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He that envies another, would have him as hateful to all Mankind as he is to himself, and to that end represents him in the blackest colours he can, to render him odious. Ill-will, we say, never speaks well, but delights to blazon and aggravate all Miscarriages: and therefore to cure these Vices of the Tongue, we must root all Spite and Envy out of the Mind, which are so prejudicial to the good Name of our Neighbour, and learn that piece of Charity that envieth not, and will not suffer us to think or speak unseemingly of any.

Thus we see both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in this Commandment: To the former belong all the evil Arts of lessening or hurting our Neighbour's Credit; to the latter appertain all the good means of preserving and promoting their Reputation. For the better observing of both, it will not be amiss to recommend to you that wholesome Advice of St. Paul to this end, in *1 Thess. 4. 11. Study to be quiet, and do your own business*: where the Apostle, for the preserving of Mens good Name, puts them,

1. Upon the study of Peace and Quietness; for Brawls and Contention sharpen Mens Tongues, and make them speak and think the worst they can of one another. He that stirreth up Strife, will surely stir up Slander: for as the moving of the Water raiseth up the Slime and Filth that lies at the bottom, so the moving of Strife stirs up the Gall and Choler within; and that will corrupt the Language, and discover itself in the Bitterness of the Tongue. To prevent which, the Apostle wills Men to *seek after Peace, and study to be quiet*; to which end, they should beware of Faction, and making of Parties, and avoid all Fraud and Falshood in their dealings: for these things break the Peace, and disturb the Quiet of the World.

Now *Study*, we know, implies an earnest Intention of Mind, accompany'd with diligent Enquiry and Endeavours after something: and the Apostle making Quietness a matter of Study, shews at once the Excellency of it, that 'tis worth studying; and likewise the Difficulty of it, that it wants it.

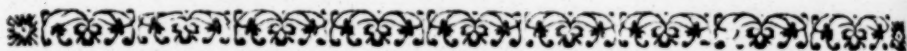
That 'tis worth our Study, the many Benefits we reap from Peace, and the many Miseries that flow from Contention, may easily satisfy us.

That it wants it, is no less evident from the Proneness of Mankind to Feuds and Contention, and the many Occasions and Temptations leading thereunto.

2. To

2. To preserve each other's good Name, we must mind and do our own Business, without unnecessary meddling in other Mens Matters; for they that thrust themselves into others Business, commonly make too bold with their Reputation, assuming all Wisdom to themselves, and scarce allowing others enough to understand or manage their own Affairs. Hence the Apostle joins *Busy-Bodies and Tattlers* together, 1 *Tim.* 5. 13. adding, that they *wander about from house to house, not only idle, but Tattlers, and speaking things which they ought not.*

To conclude then this Commandment: We are here directed to avoid all unjust ways of lessening or detracting from the Honour and Reputation of our Neighbour, which is *bearing false Witness against him*; and likewise to do all the Right and Service we lawfully may to his good Name, which is the bearing true Testimony to and for him.



DISCOURSE XXII.

EXOD. XX. 17.

Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-Servant, nor his Maid-Servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's.

THESE Words contain the Tenth and last Commandment in the Decalogue; the Design whereof is to regulate the inward Thoughts and Desires of the Heart, and to keep them from all unlawful lusting or coveting what is another's. The foregoing Precepts seem expressly to relate only to the outward Man, and to restrain the external Acts of Violence and Injustice; but this goes deeper, and lays a Restraint upon the inward Man; it puts a Check upon all secret and unlawful Desires, tho they never come into Act, and refines the Heart from all unjust Hankerings, thereby purifying the Fountain, or stopping the Spring whence all Evil issues: for *out of the Heart proceed*

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need evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemies, Mat. 15. 19.

Indeed all the Laws of God being spiritual, reach the inward Man, and affect the Heart; and therefore our Saviour, in expounding the Commandments, hath shew'd the inward Motions to Sin to be prohibited with the outward Acts.

But yet because this is not plainly or literally express'd in the former Precepts, God Almighty thought fit to add this last Commandment, in which he expressly arraigns the Thoughts, and condemns the very first Motions of our Heart towards any thing that is evil, saying, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, &c.* In which he requires us to be so far from depriving any of what is theirs, that we are not so much as to wish or desire it, abstaining not only from all unjust Actions, but from all covetous Inclinations; which is the Sense of these words, *Thou shalt not covet.*

Now this Precept being negative, I must (as we have done in the foregoing) observe both what is forbidden, and what is requir'd in it.

For the first, the great thing forbidden in this Law, is the Sin of Covetousness, or an inordinate lusting after, or desiring that which is another's. I call it an inordinate lusting, because there may be an honest and regular Desire of that which is another's, when it keeps within due bounds, and confines itself only to just and lawful Means of obtaining it: for there can be no Traffick or Commerce between Man and Man, without desiring what is another's; no Man will buy or purchase any thing of another, which he has not a mind to, and all Commerce and Exchange of one thing for another depends upon their liking or desiring one another's Goods. But beside these fair and orderly Courses, there are other irregular Desires, whereby Men thirst after others Goods, without the due Means of compassing them; and these, if they go no farther, tho they seldom rest there, are gross Violations of this Commandment.

There are some things of our Neighbour's, that may not lawfully be parted with at all: there are others that he cannot part with without great Loss and Inconvenience; and there are other things which he may be unwilling to part with. Now in such cases to covet any of our Neighbour's Goods, is a very evil Covetousness; and this will lead me to

consider the several Objects of Concupiscence recited in this Commandment. As,

1. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's House*. By his House here we are to understand not only the Place of his Habitation, but all the Lands and Tenements of another, his Field, Vineyard, or whatever else he is rightfully possess'd of; these we are to suffer him quietly to enjoy, without so much as cherishing any secret Wishes or Hankerings after them. 'Twas *Abab's* Sin to covet *Naboth's* Vineyard, and 'twill be no less so in us to think after our Neighbour's House or Farm: not but that in some cases there may be a fair and honest way of desiring and procuring to a Man's self the Lands and Tenements of another; as when the Owner may legally part with them, when he is willing to do so, and when the Terms on both sides are just and right; in which cases he may not only desire, but enter upon such purchas'd Possessions: But where they may not be lawfully sold, as where they are entail'd on other Heirs, and where they are unwilling to part with them, there to covet or invade them is a sinful Concupiscence.

2. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Wife*. This is in no wise to be coveted, because 'tis in no wise to be parted with; *Those whom God hath join'd together, no Man may put asunder*. No Consent of Parties can dissolve the Bonds of Wedlock, or violate the Laws of Chastity, and therefore all Desires of this kind must be sinful and inordinate; for being made one by their own mutual Agreement, as well as by the Institution of God Almighty, their Hearts may not stray from each other, nor must the Hearts of others run towards them: so that to covet or withdraw the Affection of either, is a manifest Breach of the Laws of God and Nature.

3. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Servant*, whether it be *Man or Maid-Servant*: for these are a part of our Neighbour's Goods, which being by mutual Covenant and Promise become his, he hath a right to their Labour, and is by the Laws of God and Man entitl'd to the Benefit of their Service, and therefore none may lawfully desire or deprive him of it. Indeed, a Master and Servant by mutual Consent may lawfully part, and then they are free for any other; and sometimes a Master for just reasons may remove and put away an idle and unfaithful Servant: but none may secretly wish for, entice or flock a-

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way another's Servant, for this is a Breach of the Rules of Justice and Charity, and breeds no small Disturbance among Neighbours ; and therefore we may not at any time seek to raise Jealousies or Dislike between Master and Servant, with a design to get him away, nor use any Baits or Allurements to tempt or entice him from him. For this is to do that to another, which we would be very unwilling should be done to ourselves, and so is quite contrary to that Love and Kindness we are to bear to one another.

4. We are forbidden to *covet our Neighbour's Ox or Ass* ; by which we are to understand all his Cattel of what kind or sort soever, belonging either to his Flock or Herd. In these things our Neighbour may have so just a Propriety, as may not be invaded so much as in a Wish ; for if it come there, 'tis ten to one 'twill go farther : Coveting will lead on to purloining, and the next step to desiring, is defrauding. And therefore this Commandment seeks to dam up the Fountain of this Evil, by checking the first Motions and Tendencies thereunto ; for it cautions us not only against robbing and stealing our Neighbour's Cattel, but against harbouring all Thoughts or Desires that might lead to it. Yea, we are commanded to use our best Endeavours for the preserving and encreasing our Neighbour's Flock or Kine ; but in no wise to wish the hurting or diminishing of them. If thy Neighbour's Ox or Ass fall into a Pit, our Saviour wills thee to help him out ; if he wander or go astray, thou art bid to reduce and help him home : so far ought we to be from coveting another's Cattel, that we are to save and succour them in all their Wandrings.

Lastly, We are forbidden to *covet any thing that is our Neighbour's*. The former part of the Commandment relates to things of weight and consequence ; but lest any should indulge themselves in smaller matters, or think they have a greater liberty in those things, 'tis added, *nor any thing that is his* : where we are ty'd up from desiring any the smallest thing that is another's. There are some who will own the coveting another's House, Wife, Servant, or Cattel to be very unjust and unreasonable, being all matters of some moment ; but for a little Corn, Grass, Wood, or Apples, and the like, these they think such trivial things, that they are not to be much stood upon : and so are apt in things of this nature to give a liberty not to their Hearts only in coveting, but to their Hands too in purloining of them. Now this Commandment corrects all such Mis-

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takes; for that charges us not to covet any thing that is our Neighbour's, he having an equal Right in small as well as in greater matters; and he that violates the Authority of God in the one, will soon do it in the other. 'Tis usual from little things to rise to greater, and many by using their Fingers to pilfering in smaller matters, have gone on to things of higher value; which should make Men beware of the beginnings of this Vice, and not to make bold with the Propriety of our Neighbour in the lightest matters, the Greatness or Smallness of the thing coveted making no difference in the Inordinacy of the Desire.

Thus we see the Sin forbidden in this Commandment, with the several Parts and Branches of it. And here we must call to mind the Rule laid down in the beginning; That where any Sin is forbidden, there all the Motives and Inducements to it are prohibited with it: By which Rule we shall find sundry Evils condemn'd by this Law, as leading to this great Sin of Covetousness. As,

(1.) Discontent with our present Condition: This we shew'd to be forbidden in the sixth Commandment, as an Occasion of stealing; for he that is uneasy and dissatisfy'd with his own State, will be invading of others, and will not stick to repair what he thinks lacking in his own Fortunes by taking from his Neighbour. And the same is forbidden in this Commandment, as an Occasion of coveting; for he that likes not his own Condition, will be still coveting and craving what he should not; and while he thinks he hath not enough, will be ever uneasy and desirous of more: *The Foolishness of Man* (saith Solomon) *perverteth his way, and his Heart fretteth against the Lord*, Prov. 19. 3. where he styles Discontent, *The Foolishness of Man*; and indeed so it is, for it deprives Men of all the Comfort of what they have, and makes them as restless with, as without it. *Abab* could take no pleasure in all the Glory and Greatness of a Kingdom, whilst he thirsted after *Nabor's* Vineyard; for 'tis said, *He came to his House heavy and displeas'd, he laid him down upon his Bed, turn'd away his Face, and would eat no Bread*, 1 Kings 21. 4. This Folly of a Man (as the Wise-Man tells us) *perverteth his way*; so it did him, for it led him into Oppression and Bloodshed, and so it does many others, who are hereby led into the ways of Fraud and Injustice. The Apostle declares, that they who thus covet to be rich, by an Uneasiness in their present Fortunes, *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into*
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many foolish and hurtful Lusts, that drown them in Destruction and Perdition. Beside, the Wise-Man adds, that Discontent with our Condition fretteth the Heart against the Lord; as if he had dealt hardly with them, and deny'd them that which they desir'd or deserv'd: it makes them quarrel with the Dispensations of Divine Providence, and think other Mens Lot better than theirs; this leads to coveting, and that to the purloining what is another's.

(2.) Envy is another Sin forbidden in this Commandment, as an Occasion of this evil Concupiscence. This is an Effect of the former, and naturally leads to Covetousness; for he that is discontented with his own Condition, will be ever envying that of others, and that will naturally beget inordinate Desires and Hankerings after it. This is a Sin that offers a great Indignity to God, for it will not allow him the Disposal of his own Blessings: the envious Person would have things order'd not by the Wisdom of the Divine Will, but by the Measures of his Fancy and Humour; he would be the sole Carver of his own and other Mens Fortunes, and therefore grudges and murmurs if any one have more than he would have him; which is a great Affront to the Wisdom and Authority of our Maker.

Beside, This is high Injustice to our Neighbour, to covet what is justly his, and to repine at his Prosperity, in which we ought to rejoice; to ail at him because God hath favour'd him, and to love him the less for that for which we ought to love him the more. Again, this is no small Injury to a Man's self, for it destroys the Peace and Tranquillity of his Mind, and robs him of all the Comfort he might reap from his own or others Prosperity; this envious coveting of what is another's, serving only to fret and gall his Mind, to macerate his Body, and to bring Leanness and Rotteneſs into his Bones.

(3.) Another Occasion of Coveting here forbidden, is an immoderate Care and Carking for the things of this Life; for this carries Men oftentimes too far, and makes their Desires run after that which is another's: for which reason we find our Saviour giving a strict Caution against it, Mat. 6. 25. *I say unto you, Take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on: Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Rayment? &c.* Where our Saviour does not condemn all prudent and moderate Care about earthly things, nor will us to cast off all Thoughts and Concern

for any bodily Provision; no, we are bid to *provide things honest in the sight of all Men*, and to that end, to be *not slothful, but diligent in the Business of our Vocation*, Rom. 12. 11, 17. But our Saviour's Charge is, not to give way to any anxious, perplexing, or solicitous Cares about these things, such as are accompany'd with a Distrust of God's Providence, and put Men upon inordinate Desires and Endeavours after what is not their own: for these destroy Property, and disturb the Peace and Order of the World; they violate the Laws of God, and bring Ruin and Destruction to our own Souls: and therefore we find our Saviour using many Arguments in that Chapter, to cure these carking and immoderate Cares. For,

1st, He sends us to the Fowls of the Air, and the Beasts of the Field, who *sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them*; adding, *Are ye not much better than they?* ver. 26. To check all solicitous Thoughts about Meat and Drink, he minds us of the Provision made for all inferior Creatures, how he *feeds the Ravens*, and will not suffer a *Sparrow to fall to the ground*; and can we think he will starve his own Children? Again, to cure all anxious Cares about Rayment, he,

2^{dly}, Sends us to the *Lillies of the Field, to consider how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his Glory was not array'd like one of these*; ver. 28. adding, that if God so clothe the Grass of the Field, that to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little Faith?

3^{dly}, He shews the Vanity of all such carking and distrustful Cares, which can neither *add one Cubit to our Stature*, nor one Grain to our Estate, without God's Blessing; which will be sooner obtain'd by a devout Dependence upon his Providence, than by all the anxious and indirect Arts of our own Contrivance.

These, together with Idleness and Pride, are the principal Motives and Occasions of that sinful Concupiscence condemn'd in this Commandment, which we are therefore carefully to watch against, as the Enemies of our Souls, and the Obstacles of our Salvation. In a word, let us check the first Motions of Discontent, Envy, and Ambition, which else will betray us into greater Evils, lest by letting loose our Hearts to coveting, we let loose our Hands to picking and stealing; and by both let ourselves loose to all the Miseries and Punishments both of this Life and the next.

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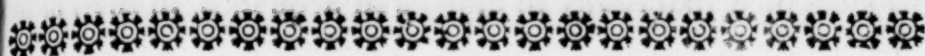


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DISCOURSE XXIII.

EXOD. XX. 17.

Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House, thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife, nor his Man-Servant, nor his Maid-Servant, nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing that is thy Neighbour's.

I HAVE spoken to the Negative Part of this Commandment, which forbids all coveting or desiring any thing that is another's: I proceed now to the Affirmative Part of it, which instructs us in the thing requir'd in it, and that is, Contentment with our own Condition; both which are urg'd by the Apostle, Heb. 13. 5. *Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.*

St. Paul represents this as an Art, which he had study'd and learnt himself, Phil. 4. 11. *I have learnt (saith he) in whatever State I am, therewith to be content:* which Art he would likewise have learnt and practis'd by all Christians, 1 Tim. 6. 8. *Having Food and Rayment, let us learn therewith to be content.* In treating therefore of this great Duty, I must,

First, Shew the Nature of Contentment, what it is.

Secondly, The Fitness and Reasonableness of it. And,

Lastly, Conclude with some Rules to attain to the Art of it. For the

First, Contentment is such a Satisfaction or Well-pleasedness of Mind in a Man's own Condition, as renders him easy both to himself and others.

I style it a *Satisfaction or Well-pleasedness of Mind*: This shews us the Rise and Seat of true Contentment, which springs from within, and is wholly seated in the Mind. It riseth not from the Abundance of outward things, which oftner breeds Disquiet than brings Contentment; but in

the inward Frame and Disposition of the Soul, whereby 'tis enabled thankfully to enjoy and acquiesce in the Portion allotted to us.

Moreover, I style it a Well-pleasedness *with our own Condition*: This shews us the Object of Contentment, which is our own Condition; or, as the Apostle expresses it, *with such things as we have*. He that suffers his Fancy to rove, or his Desires to run after what is another's, will never be content with his own; as we may see in *Ahab*, who thirsting after *Naboth's Vineyard*, could find no pleasure in all the Glory and Greatness of a Kingdom. And therefore *St. Paul* declares, that he *coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*, Acts. 20. 33. but had *learnt to be contented with his own Estate*, Phil. 4. 11. and that not only with his present State, but with any State whatsoever that should happen to him: for *he knew how to be abased, as well as how to abound, every where and in all things he was instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need*; as he tells us, ver. 12.

Furthermore, I style it such a Well-pleasedness with our Condition, as *renders us easy to ourselves*: *The good Man* (saith *Solomon*) *shall be satisfy'd from himself*. He hath such a Spring of Joy and Peace from within, as keeps him from murmuring and repining at his own Lot, and makes him cheerfully welcome whatever God is pleas'd to send him; which good Effect of this Virtue is attended with another, which renders him easy not only to himself, but to all others: for Contentment preserves Men from all the evil Effects of Envy, and makes them rather to rejoyce, than repine at another's Prosperity; by which the Heart is kept from coveting, and the Hand from purloining any thing that is another's. This is the Nature, and these are the Effects of Contentment, which is a Lesson fit and necessary to be learnt of all Christians. To which end I must proceed,

Secondly, To shew the Reasonableness of this Virtue: And that will plainly appear, if we consider,

1. That whatever our State and Condition may be, 'tis that which is allotted us by God, the Sovereign Disposer of all things; nothing that we have, can properly be call'd our own, for we receive all from the Bounty of our Maker: *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof*; which he bestows, as he thinks fit, on the Sons of Men. We are

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Debtors to him for our very Being, for *we ourselves* (as the Apostle tells us) *are not our own*, being made by his Power, and daily supported by his Providence, in whom *we live, move, and have our Being*: So that we are concern'd rather to be content and thankful for what we have, than murmur and complain for what we want; *Is it not lawful for him to do what he will with his own? Is thine Eye evil because his is good?* And as we can claim nothing as our Due, so neither can we challenge any thing as our Desert; for we *are less than the least of all his Mercies*, and can merit nothing but Misery and Wrath at God's hand: and where we can challenge nothing of Right, we ought in reason to be content and receive with Gratitude what we have. But then,

2. If to the Sovereign Right and Title of God Almighty, we add the Consideration of his Wisdom and Goodness, we shall see far greater reason to be content with our Portion; for what we have, is dealt out to us by an all-wise and gracious Hand, even by one who knows what is better and fitter for us than we can do for ourselves: for we are many times childish in our Wishes, and too apt to be partial to ourselves; longing for things we should not, and desiring that which would do us more harm than good. But God in his Wisdom knows what is proper and fit for us, and out of his Goodness deals out to us such a Portion as best tends to promote our Welfare; and therefore we ought in point of Interest, as well as Conscience, humbly and thankfully to acquiesce in his Dispensations: for to be dissatisfy'd with our Condition, is in effect to set up our own Judgment above his, and to think ourselves wiser than he; yea, to be displeas'd with our Lot, is the ready way to forfeit the Favour of our Maker, and to provoke him, instead of giving more, to withdraw what we have already.

3. The Comfort that accompanies Contentment, together with the Miseries that attend the contrary, are sufficient to make us aim at the one, and abhor the other. A contented Mind is always easy, it creates a constant Calm within, and is attended with an undisturb'd Tranquillity; whereas Discontent and Envy gall and fret the Mind, and raise a perpetual Storm in the Breast that harbours them. In a word, Content is Happiness, 'tis the blest Estate of Heaven, the Joy of glorify'd Saints, and of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, who are not only pleas'd with their own, but delighted with the Joys and Blessedness of one another;

another; whereas Discontent and Envy are the Passions of Hell, the Torment of damned Spirits, whose own Uneasiness makes them, like so many Furies, tear and devour one another. But,

Lastly, How may we learn this excellent Art of Contentment? This being a matter of so great consequence both to the publick and private Peace, it will not be amiss to prescribe some Rules for the better attaining of it. And,

1. Because this excellent Virtue is seated chiefly in the Mind, we are to begin there, and endeavour not so much to bring our Condition to our Mind, as our Mind to our Condition. The reason why so few attain to this Art, is because they take not the right course in learning it: They are indeed solicitous enough to bring their Estates to their Mind, which being too large to be satisfy'd with these earthly things is a vain attempt, and shews that they go the wrong way to work; for *he that loveth Silver* (saith Solomon) *shall not be satisfy'd with Silver, nor he that loveth Abundance with Increase*; Eccl. 5. 10. whereas to move aright in this matter, we must labour to bring our Mind to our Estate, and to rest satisfy'd with it, whatever it be, as being the Allotment of that Divine Wisdom and Goodness, that can better judge what is fit for us, than we can for ourselves.

2. To be content with our Condition, let us consider the Insufficiency of earthly things to make us happy. 'Tis the fond Mistake of some Persons, to think if they could arrive to such an Estate, or attain to such a degree of Honour, Dignity and Preferment in the World, they should be then happy Men, and would sit down satisfy'd without seeking or desiring any more; whereas, when they have attain'd their Wish, they find their Cares and Troubles greater, and themselves more uneasy than they were before: Like Children who imagine, that were they on such a Hill they should touch the Sky; but being got thither, find it as far from them as 'twas before. And therefore *Cyneas* the Philosopher, upon *Pyrrhus's* recounting to him his Designs upon *Rome*, *Sicily*, and *Carthage*, pertinently told him, that if he could not be content with his own Kingdom, neither would he be satisfy'd with the whole World. Indeed to seek for satisfaction from these things, is to seek the Living among the Dead; for they are neither suited to the Nature, nor satisfy the Cravings of a Spirit; they rather increase than allay

allay the Thirst of the Soul: so that let the World flow in ever so fast upon us, our Desires will still run faster, and fly either above or beyond them; and therefore our Wisdom will be either to bound or fix them upon higher and better things.

3. To learn this Lesson of Contentment, we must subdue all Pride and Haughtiness of Mind; for he that is highly opinionated of himself, will think he hath not what he deserves, and that will put him upon desiring more, still repining at his own, and envying another's Lot: whereas he that thinks as meanly as he ought of himself, will find that he deserves nothing, and that he lives only upon Alms and Bounry, and that will make him thankful and content with any thing.

4. To be content with our Condition, we must diligently imploy ourselves in that Place and Calling wherein God hath set us; for that will secure us God's Blessing upon our Endeavours, and that will bring us Content: *The Blessing of God* (saith Solomon) *maketh rich, and bringeth no Sorrow with it.* He who hath that, is rich in any Condition, and cannot lack a Competence. 'Tis Idleness that brings Want, and that gives way to covetous and envious Thoughts; which Industry in Business chafes away, and leaves no leisure or occasion to attend to.

5. To be content with our Estate, we must take care to live within the bounds of it; for he that goes beyond it, will necessarily run into those Debts that lead to unavoidable Dangers and Discontents: and therefore Frugality, Temperance and Honesty in our dealing have been ever found excellent Helps to Contentment, there being a Blessing annex'd to these things, that brings Peace to the Mind, and Prosperity to our Affairs; whereas Unthrift and Dishonesty are evermore attended with a Curse, which disquiets the Mind, wastes the Substance, and lays a Foundation for all kind of Misery and Trouble.

6. To get and preserve a contented Mind, we must look more to those that are below, than those that are above us; the Splendor of Greatness is apt to dazzle the Eye, and to create Envy and Discontent. He that gazeth too much upon the Wealth, Honour and Power of such as are above him, will be easily induc'd to admire their Happiness, and to murmur at his own meaner Condition; whereas he that looks below him, and considers how many want the good things which he enjoys, will learn to be content and thankful

thankful with his own Portion. And therefore to be easily and satisfy'd with thy Lot, suffer not thy Fancy to run too much upon the Glory and Greatness of the World, as upon the Cares and Troubles that attend them. Consider that Nature is contented with a little, and Grace with less. He that lives by the Necessities of Nature, can scarce be poor, for these are few and easily supply'd; but he that lives by the Cravings of a carnal and sensual Appetite, can never be rich, for these multiply Wants, and make artificial Necessities, and to give way to these, is to drive Contentment from us: For which reason, we should learn to bound our Desires, and confine them within the Compass of our own Estate, knowing that *our Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that we possess*, and that Contentment is more rarely found in a splendid Fortune, than in a moderate and humble one.

Lastly, to attain this Grace of Contentment, we must learn to fix our Trust and Dependence upon God, who hath promis'd never to leave or forsake us; he alone is all-sufficient, and able to satisfy the Cravings of our Souls, and supply the Wants and Necessities of our Bodies. As for all other things, they leave us destitute when we have most need of them; they stand us in no stead in the time of Sicknes, the hour of Death, or the Day of Judgment; and afford not the least Dram of Comfort when we want the highest Cordials: 'tis God only that is our sutable and sufficient Portion; and therefore the Apostle wills us not to *trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy*.

Thus I have given you a brief account of what is requir'd, and what is forbidden in this and all the other Commandments; the serious consideration whereof may teach us to end as we began, with an Admiration of the Excellency and Extent of the Divine Law, which (as the Psalmist tells us) *is exceeding broad*, both in the Latitude of its Precepts and Prohibitions: and therefore with him too we ought to make it the Subject of our daily Study and Meditation.

For a close of all, *Let us* (as the Wise-Man directs us) *hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man*; Eccl. 12. 13.

This is the whole Duty of Man, which our Saviour hath compriz'd in the Love of God and our Neighbour; and this is the whole Happiness of Man, which will consist in the constant Exercise and Perfection of both.

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DISCOURSE XXIV.

ECCLES. xii. 13.

*Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter,
Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this
is the whole Duty of Man.*

THE next Question in the Catechism, that follows the Commandments, is, *What dost thou chiefly learn by these Commandments?*

The Answer whereunto is, *I learn two things, my Duty towards God, and my Duty towards my Neighbour.*

For the Explication of this Question and Answer, I have made choice of these words of Solomon, *Let us hear, &c.* where the Wise-Man, to summon our Attention,

1. Calls upon us to *hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter.*

2. He sums up our Duty to God, in the *Fear of him*; and our Duty to our Neighbour, in *keeping his Commandments.* And,

3. Declares of these two, *That they are the whole of Man.*

1. I say, the Wise-Man to summon our Attention, here calls upon us to *hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter.*

Solomon is, in the beginning of this Book, call'd the Preacher, and this Book of *Ecclesiastes* is the Sermon he preach'd to Mankind. The Text he preach'd upon is in the 2d Verse of the 1st Chapter, *Vanity of Vanities* (saith the Preacher) *all is Vanity*: which words contain the true and severe Judgment he pass'd upon all things under the Sun, which he pronounces to be not only vain, but even Vanity itself; yea, to shew the Greatness of their Vanity, he styles them *Vanity of Vanities*: which he doubles and trebles, to set forth the infinite and excessive Vanity of them.

This, in the following part of the Sermon, he proves by many Arguments, and confirms it to us in all the Parts and Instances of earthly Felicity; particularly in the three great Idols of the World, Riches, and Honours, and Pleasures:

tures: all which he found by his own Experience to be not only *Vanity, but Vexation of Spirit.*

As for Riches, he had Wealth as *plentiful as the Stones in the Street*, 1 Kings 18. 27. and so could want no Advantages to try Experiments of them: He had likewise Wisdom as *large as the Sand of the Sea*, 1 Kings 4. 29. and so was abundantly able to draw Conclusions from them; and yet when he had ransack'd the whole World, to find what Happiness all the Wealth and Riches of it could afford, he return'd disappointed, and was forc'd to pronounce of it all, *This is also Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

As for the Honours of the World of which he had as large a Share as any Mortal, he declares them to be but a *Shadow, a Vapour, a Wind that passeth away and cometh not again*; yea, *Nothing, less than Nothing and Vanity.*

For the Pleasures of the World, of which he had the freest and fullest Enjoyment that ever any had, he pronounces of them, that they are all no better than Madness and Folly: *I said of Laughter* (saith he) *that it is mad, and of Mirth, what is it?* Ch. 2. ver. 2. meaning, that they were so extremely vain, that he could find nothing in them. And thus, having run thro' the several Scenes of earthly Felicity, and fully try'd and consider'd all things that the World is wont to prize and pursue for Happiness, in this last Chapter he draws to a Conclusion, ending as he began, with *Vanity of Vanities* (saith the Preacher) *all is Vanity*, Ver. 8. And then for a close of all, wills us to *hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man*: where he exempts the Fear of God, and Obedience to his Laws, from that Vanity under which he had concluded all other things; and intimates, that nothing but this can give us any true Content and Happiness. And this will lead me, as both the Text and Catechism direct, to consider our Duty to God, and our Duty to our Neighbour; the one being compriz'd in the *Fear of God*, the other in *keeping his Commandments*. I begin,

First, with the Fear of God, which Solomon styles, The Beginning of Wisdom; and this we shall find to comprize all the Commandments of the first Table, which relate more immediately to our Duty to God.

But what is this Fear of God that directs us in all our Duty and Demeanour towards him? In answering to which, I say,

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say, 'tis such an awful Apprehension and Regard of the Divine Majesty, arising from a sense of his infinite Power, Justice and Omnipresence, as makes us careful not to offend him. Where I style it,

1. An awful Apprehension and Regard of the Divine Majesty: This shews the Seat of it, which is within. As all Passions are seated in the Soul; so this religious Fear is more especially rooted in the Heart, and resides in a Mind possess'd with a holy Awe and Dread of a supreme Being. Again,

2. This holy Awe is said to proceed from a sense of the Divine Justice, Power and Omnipresence; and this shews us the Rise of this religious Fear, which springs from an Apprehension of those Attributes of God, which are apt to strike the Mind with a Fear and Dread of him: for his Justice will not suffer him to acquit the Guilty, his Power is able to inflict the sorest Punishments, and his Omnipresence makes him privy to all our Actions, so that nothing can escape him. And,

Lastly, 'Tis said to be such an awful Regard of the Divine Majesty, as keeps us from offending him: This shews us the Effect of this Divine Fear, which is to make us careful to please him by observing his Laws, and fearful of displeasing him by any breach of them; so the Wise-Man tells us, *The Fear of the Lord is to depart from Evil*, Prov. 16. 17. And the Psalmist, *Stand in awe and sin not*, Psal. 4. 4. where standing in awe is prescrib'd as the means to prevent sinning against him. He that feareth another, whom he knows able to hurt him, will beware of provoking him; and if we fear God from a sense of his Power, we shall take care how we offend him. For this reason it is that the Fear of God is so often enjoin'd in Holy Scripture, *Fear the Lord, all ye his Saints*, saith holy David, Psal. 34. 9. And elsewhere, *Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice before him with Trembling*. A good Man is describ'd to be one *that feareth God, and escheweth Evil*; whereas a wicked Person is said to be one, *that hath no Fear of God before his Eyes*: The former is restrain'd by the Fear of God from doing Evil; the latter, having cast off all Awe and Dread of him, hath no check to keep him from the vilest Enormities. Thus we see something of the Nature and Effects of this Fear of God, and what a Curb it is to restrain us from all sinful Practices: We are now farther to consider it as a brief Summary or Compendium of our Duty to God; and

and this will be evident, by taking a short View of the Commandments of the first Table, which relate to and contain our Duty to him, together with the Influence that the Fear of God hath upon the observing them all. And,

1. The Fear of God will make us keep to him, and effectually restrain us from *having any other Gods beside or before him*, which is the first Commandment. He that hath this holy Awe and Reverence for the Divine Majesty, will be afraid to offend him, by departing from him into the ways of Atheism and Idolatry, or setting up any Rival Deities against him. The Sense of his Power and Greatness, as our only Lord and Master, will keep us from falling down to any other, and so 'twill learn us that Lesson of our Saviour, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; and none that have any true Knowledge and Fear of God, will ever be drawn to do otherwise. Again,

2. The fear of God will keep us from worshipping of him in any way contrary to his Word and Will, as by Images, Pictures, or any vile Representations of him, which is the thing forbidden in the second Commandment. He that truly feareth God, will not worship the Creature instead of the Creator, nor much less give his Glory to graven Images. The Sense of God's Jealousy of a Rival, and the Vengeance he hath denounc'd against them and their Posterity that thus shew their Hatred to him, will cause him to avoid all such Image-Worship, and teach him to worship God, as he hath commanded, *in Spirit and Truth*.

3. The fear of God will keep Men from profaning the sacred Name of God, and beget a Veneration for all things that are call'd by it, which is the substance of the third Commandment. 'Tis the want of this holy Fear and Reverence, that makes Men venture so boldly to take God's Name in vain, by rash and false Swearing, to invade his Property by Sacrilege, to despise his Ministers by withholding the Portion he hath allotted them, to pollute his Sanctuary by Profaneness, and to think so meanly of Persons, Places and Things consecrated and call'd by his Name: whereas did we stand in awe of God as we ought, we should not venture in any of these ways to sin against him. Did we truly believe that *the Lord will not hold them guiltless that thus take his Name in vain*, we should honour his holy Name more, and avoid all the ways of dishonouring and detracting from it.

Lastly,

Lastly, The Fear of God will make us to *remember the Sabbath-day to keep it Holy*, and to have a due Regard to the times set apart and devoted to his Service, which is the thing requir'd in the fourth Commandment. If the Fear of God be before our Eyes, we shall not profane those Days by following the Works of our Calling, and much less by following the Works of Sin; but rather make Conscience of resting at those times from all our Labours, the better to attend the Worship of God, and the Exercises of our holy Religion: especially considering the liberal Allowance that God hath given us of six Days in the Week for our own Use, and reserving only one Day in seven for his own Service. And sure, he that hath any Fear of God or any Honour for him, will be both afraid and asham'd to deny him this. Thus we see how the Fear of God runs thro' the first Table of the Law, and at once comprizes and enforces the Duty we owe to God.

The next thing we are to consider, is the Duties we owe to our Neighbour; and they are contain'd in the Commandments of the Second Table, and are perform'd by keeping them. As,

1. By keeping the Fifth Commandment we observe our Duty to all our Superiours; which is, to *honour our Parents* both Natural and Civil, and to *obey those that are set over us*, both in Church and State: to which we are encourag'd by the promise of a long Life here, and an eternal Life of Glory hereafter.

2. By keeping the Sixth Commandment, we perform the Duty we owe to the Lives of one another, and that both of Body and Soul; which is, to take the best care we can of the Health, Safety and Welfare of both, and to avoid all the ways of maiming, murdering and destroying of either.

3. By keeping the Seventh Commandment, we observe the Duty we owe to our Neighbour's Wife; which is, to abstain from all Uncleaness, in Thought, Word, and Deed, to *keep our Vessels in Sanctification and Honour*, to preserve a pure and inviolable Chastity, and to be true to all the Laws and Promises of Wedlock.

4. By keeping the Eighth Commandment, we perform the Duty we owe to the Goods or Substance of our Neighbour: which is, not to *steal*, by taking away any thing from him, or withholding any thing that is due to him; not to over-reach him by any Methods of Fraud or Deceit,

nor to lessen his Substance by any ways of Robbery or Oppression: but rather to use our best endeavours to preserve and increase his Substance, by doing him all the Right and Service we can, and by all good means to promote and advance his Prosperity.

5. By keeping the Ninth Commandment, we observe the Duty we owe to the Credit and good Name of our Neighbour: which is, not to blast it by bearing false Witness, Lying, or any publick Slanders and Defamation; nor undermine it, by secret Whispering, Tale-bearing and Backbiting: but as much as in us lies, to silence all vilifying and detracting Language of other Men, to vindicate them from unjust Aspersions, and, as far as we may, preserve and promote the Fame and Reputation of one another.

Lastly, By keeping the Tenth Commandment, we are kept from all unjust coveting or desiring any thing that is our Neighbour's, and much more from all unlawful ways and means of making it our own; being content with what is truly and honestly ours, and willing that all others should enjoy what is theirs.

Thus as our Duty to God is included in the *Fear* of him, so is our Duty to our Neighbour contain'd in *keeping the Commandments*; which two things are here recommended to us by the wisest of Men, from the Fulness and Comprehensiveness of them, the last thing in the Text, *For this is the whole of Man.*

Which Words admit of, and are interpreted in divers Senses. As,

1. This is the whole *Duty* or Business of Man; so our *Englisch* Translation renders it, tho the word *Duty* is not in the Original, or other Translations. And so the sense is, this is the whole Work and Business incumbent upon Man, and about which we are to employ ourselves in this World: not that we are to neglect the Duties of our Calling, and to have our Minds always and only fix'd upon these Acts of Religion; but that this is the main and chief Business we are to be conversant about, and in all other matters we must have an Eye to this, referring all to it, and preferring it above all. To do otherwise, is, with *Martha*, to be cumber'd about many things, and to forget the one thing necessary. And whereas the Duties of particular Callings belong not to all, but are distributed among many, as their Abilities and Education lead them; this of *fearing God and keeping his Commandments* is of universal Concern, and extends

extends to all: *Hoc est omnis Homo*, this concerns every one, and none is exempted from it; and this is *totum Hominis*, the whole Duty, or the principal Business that belongs to him.

2. Others render the Words, this is the whole *End* of Man, or the Course to which every Man is design'd; so the *Syriack*: This ought to be the Way and Course of all Mankind; so the *Targum*. So the sense is, This was the end for which God gave Man Faculties above other Creatures, that he should honour, fear and obey him; and that he hath distinguish'd him from them, not so much by Reason, of which there are some kind of Footsteps and Semblances in Brutes, as by Religion and the Fear of God, of which there are not the least Signs or Degrees to be found among them; and so this is at once the whole Essence and the whole End of Man.

Lastly, Others render the words, this is the whole *Happiness* of Man: This is what will be most profitable and advantageous to all Men; so the *Arabick*. So the sense is, This is all that is requisite to qualify and prepare us for Happiness, and secure to us our future Bliss; the fearing of God, and keeping his Commandments, being the only means to raise our Natures to their highest Perfection, and to bring them to a Likeness and Conformity to the Divine Nature, which only the Practice of Religion and Virtue is able to do: so that this is, in all the foremention'd Senses, *the Whole of Man*, being the whole Work and Business, the whole End and Design, and the whole Interest and Happiness of Man: All which are so many powerful Arguments to persuade to the Practice of it.

1. Then, Let us learn from what hath been said to live always in the Fear of God, and that will keep us to our Duty to him: To which end let us, with the Psalmist, *set him always before us, that we may never be mov'd to do Evil*. Let us often meditate upon the Infinite Power of God, who is able to punish all our Offences committed against him, and that may strike Terror into all Offenders: and therefore our Saviour warns us *whom to fear, not Men*, whose Power can reach no farther than the Body or Goods; but *fear him who can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, *I say unto you, fear him*; Luke 12. 45. And that will help us to have more the Fear of God than Men before our Eyes.

Again, let us ponder upon his impartial Justice, that he cannot spare those that wilfully defy him. Moreover, let us frequently call to mind his infinite Mercy and Kindness to us, and that may teach us to *fear the Lord for his Goodness*, and make us not only afraid, but asham'd to offend him.

2. Let us live in constant Obedience to his Commandments, and that will keep us to our Duty to our Neighbour, and thereby *keep a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man*. I shall conclude with Moses's Saying to the Israelites; *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to serve the Lord thy God, and to keep his Commandments?* Deut. 10. 12. Which is Solomon's Conclusion here of the whole Matter, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man*; which he backs with the Thoughts of an approaching Day, when *God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil*.

DISCOURSE XXV.

MAT. xxii. 37, 38.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and the great Commandment.

MOSES contracted the whole Law into Ten Words, call'd therefore the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, the great Subject of the fore-going Exposition.

Solomon after reduc'd them to two, viz. the Fear of God, and the keeping the Commandments; which he makes the whole of Man.

But a greater than Moses and Solomon, even our blessed Saviour, has reduc'd them all to one, and made Love the fulfilling of the Law, or a brief Summary of the Law and the Prophets. Now this Love has a double Object, God and our Neighbour, which are the two Hinges upon which the

the whole Law turns, as will appear by considering the two following Questions of the Catechism.

The first whereof is, *What is thy Duty towards God?* The Answer whereunto is, *To believe in him, to fear him, to love him with all the Heart, Soul, and Mind, to worship him, to give him Thanks, to put our whole Trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and Word, and to serve him truly all the days of our Life:* All which are comprehended in the Love of God, and best perform'd by it; as we shall see by handling these words of our Saviour, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind: This is the first and the great Commandment.*

For the better understanding whereof, we must note, That Love in general is that Passion of the Soul which unites it to a beloved Object. It has two Acts that constantly attend it, a Desire to please, and a Desire to enjoy.

The Love of God is such a holy Disposition of Mind, as inclines it to seek the closest Union and Communion with him. It hath two great Motives or Inducements to it, the infinite Goodness of God in himself, and his transcendent Goodness or Kindness to us: *he is Good, and he does Good;* both which are Cords strong enough to draw, and to fasten our Affections to him.

And this Love of God must not be lukewarm and languishing, but intire and intense to the highest degree. It must be *with all the Heart;* that is, with the whole Bent of the Will and Affections: *With all the Soul;* that is, with all the Powers of the animal and sensitive Soul: *And with all the Mind;* that is, with the Understanding and Faculties of the rational Soul. St. Luke adds, *And with all our Strength;* that is, with all the Powers and Members of the Body, which are not to be the *Instruments of Sin*, as too many make them, but the *Instruments of Righteousness unto God*. Thus the most superlative Being requires and deserves our most superlative Love, which contains and draws on our whole Duty to God, as will appear by considering the several Acts and Parts of it, mention'd in the Catechism. As,

1. The Love of God includes the *believing in him;* which is the first and principal Duty we owe to him, and indeed the Foundation of all the rest, being all grounded upon the Belief and Acknowledgement of a God: for *he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. So that this

believing in him hath two Branches, the belief of his Being, and the Belief of his Word; that he is, and that all that he hath said is perfectly true. The Belief of his Being is founded upon his Works both of Creation and Providence, upon the universal Consent of all Mankind in all Times and Ages, and upon the Acts and Testimony of Conscience, which are all so many Witnesſes of him.

The Belief of his Word is founded upon the Veracity of the Speaker, together with the Miracles and Prophecies that confirm it. Now all this is compriz'd and ſuppos'd in the Love of God; for none can love one whom he does not believe, and *without Faith 'tis as impossible to love as it is to please him*. Every Paſſion of the Soul ſuppoſes an Object about which it is converſant; and conſequently, the loving of God muſt imply that he is, and that he is truly lovely, and that will draw on a firm Belief both of his Being and his Word. Again,

2. The Love of God includes the *Fear* of him, another Duty we owe to him; for he that truly loves any, will be not only careful to pleaſe, but fearful of diſpleaſing the beloved Object. What the Fear of God is, hath been ſhew'd in the foregoing Diſcourſe, *viz.* ſuch an awful regard of the Divine Majeſty, as keeps us from offending him; and that this proceeds from a Principle of Love, is evident from all thoſe places of Scripture where the Fear of God is coupled with the Love of him. When *St. John* tells us, that *there is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love caſteth out Fear; and he that feareth is not made perfect in Love*: it muſt be underſtood of a baſe ſervile Fear of Slaves to a Tyrannical Maſter, which proceeds only from a dread of Punishment; not of a filial Fear of Sons to a kind Father, which proceeds from Love, and a Senſe of Duty to him.

3. The Love of God includes the *Worſhipping* of him: that this is a Duty owing to him, is plain from the words of our Saviour, *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; Mat. 4. Now this Worſhip is that Homage and Fealty we are to pay to God, as our great Creator and Preſerver: 'tis the Acknowledgment and Adoration of his infinite Power, Juſtice, Wiſdom and Goodneſs; the celebrating and extolling thoſe transcendent and adorable Perfections we believe to be in him, and the demeaning ourſelves towards him accordingly. All which Acts of Worſhip ſpring from the Love of God, without which, the moſt pompous ſhew of them are rather abominable than acceptable to him.

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4. the Love of God includes the great Duty of *Thankfulness to him* for all his Mercies and Blessings : these lay upon us a Debt of Acknowledgment and Requitall to the best of our power ; and because we can make no answerable Returns for his manifold and inestimable Favours, we are to be daily setting forth his Praises, magnifying his Mercies towards us, and rendering to him our Tribute of Obedience for them : all which must proceed from a Breast inflam'd with Love for his unspeakable Goodness. And of this the Psalmist, that great Master of Thanksgivings, hath set us the most admirable Pattern for our Imitation.

5. The Love of God includes a *Trust and Confidence in him* ; another Duty we owe to him. None will trust one that he hates, and every one is willing to confide in a Friend whom he loves ; all Trust is founded upon the Kindness and Fidelity of him on whom we rely, and evermore flows from the Love and Belief of them. *They that know thy Name* (saith the Psalmist) *to be Elshaddai, a God All sufficient, infinitely Gracious and Merciful, will put their Trust in thee, for thou never failest them that love thee ;* Psal. 9. God's Love to us is the main Motive of his Favour, and Readiness to help us ; and our Love to him intitles us to his Care and Protection. Mutual Love begets a mutual Confidence in one another ; and as one Coal kindles another, so the fire of Love in one Man's breast occasions a warm and lively hope of Confidence in the breast of another.

In short, a due Apprehension of the Truth and Faithfulness, with other divine Excellencies that are in God, first beget a Love of him, and that begets a Trust and Affiance in him ; the latter being included and deriv'd from the former.

6. The Love of God includes the *Calling upon him*, and making our Requests known to him ; another Duty we owe to him.

As we are to praise God for Blessings receiv'd, so are we to pray to him for the Mercies we want ; and this, a true Love of God and ourselves will evermore dispose us to do. 'Tis the Property of Love to open the Heart and the Mouth too, and to pour out the Soul and Mind of the beloved Party ; and if we are rightly affected towards God, we shall frequently address to, and call upon him. So we find David did, *Psal. 55. 17, 18. As for me, I will call upon God, and he shall save me : In the Evening and Morning, and*

at Noon-day will I pray, and that instantly, and he shall hear my Voice. This God expects from us, and hath promis'd to bless it; *Call upon me in the time of Trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me*, Psal. 50. 15. And this must proceed from a Principle of Love, and be done heartily and affectionately to him; for God abhors all heartless Petitions, and the loudest Calls and Cries to him will find no Audience or Acceptance, where the Heart is wanting.

7. The Love of God includes the *Honouring of his Holy Name and Word*, another Duty we are to pay to him. Honour in general is an inward Esteem and Veneration of some Excellency in the Person or Thing honour'd, express'd by some outward tokens of Respect and Reverence to it. The honouring of God's holy Name, is the thinking and speaking honourably of all his Titles, Attributes and other things that belong to him, and keeping them from all Contempt and Profanation; and this is the effect of a true and intire Love to him. He that loves another will be pleas'd at the mentioning of him, and cannot hear him disparag'd or evil spoken of: *They that love thy Name* (saith the Psalmist) *will be joyful in thee*, Psal. 5. 11. they will delight in the Praises, and be uneasy at the Abuse of his Holy Name. Moreover, the honouring of God's Word is the setting a high Price and Value upon the Holy Scriptures, esteeming them the Dictates of a divine Spirit, and the infallible Oracles of God, and so making them the Rule of our Lives, and the Subject of our daily Study and Meditation. And this too proceeds from the Love of God, which inclines us to honour and reverence whatever comes from him: *O how I love thy Law!* (saith David) and then it follows, *'tis my Meditation all the Day*. We think much and often upon what we love, and can scarce let it slip out of our Mind: *Thy Word* (saith the Psalmist) *is dearer to me than multitudes of Gold and Silver; yea, sweeter than the Honey or Honey-comb?* And all from the dear Affection he bore to him that gave it.

Lastly, the Love of God includes the *serving of him truly all the days of our Life*, another great Duty we owe to him. This is a constant effect of Love, and indeed the chief sign of the Reality of it. Jacob served for Rachel seven Years, and they seem'd but a few Days to him, for the Love that he bore to her, Gen. 29. 20. And if we truly love God, we shall not think it much to serve him truly all the days of our Life. Where two Qualifications are all

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sign'd of the Service we are to pay to him, viz. it must be true and sincere, *not in Word and in Tongue* only, which is but Compliment and Hypocrisy, but *in Deed and in Truth*, which alone can manifest the Reality of it. And it must be constant, and continue to our Lives end; not serving him sometimes, and then changing our Master, but keeping to him and abiding in his Service to our Lives end. And indeed the Service of our whole Lives is all little enough for the Wages, and comes vastly short of the Reward he hath allotted for it: And did we understand matters aright, and bear that Affection we ought to our Maker, we should reckon no other Service fit to be nam'd or compar'd with it.

Thus we see the whole Duty we owe to God, as 'tis summ'd up in the Commandments and Catechism; and that the Love of God comprizes and runs thro' all the several Parts and Acts of it.

And this our Saviour here styles *the first and the great Commandment*; the last thing to be consider'd in our Text. Now this is styl'd the first Commandment,

1. In order of Time, this being the first thing to be taught and learn'd by us: for true Religion begins with the Love of God, and is founded upon it. What *Solomon* saith of the Fear, is true likewise of the Love of God, that 'tis *the beginning of Wisdom*; 'tis the first step we are to make towards him, and that will lead us on to all the other parts of our Duty and Obedience to him. He that sets out betimes with the Love of God, will move on chearfully ever after in the ways of his Commandments; whereas they that do not begin early with the Knowledge and Love of him, will be still *erring and straying from him like lost Sheep*. So that our first and principal Care should be to set our Hearts right towards God, and to turn the whole stream and bent of our Affections to him, and that will help to keep us right in the whole course of our Lives ever after; and therefore *Solomon* advises to *train up Children betimes in the way that they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it*: And our Saviour directs to *seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, and then we shall not need to be too solicitous about lesser Matters*; Prov. 22. 6. Mat. 6. 33.

2. The Love of God is the first Commandment, not only in order of Time, but in order of Nature; because this is the Root from whence all other Virtues grow, or the Spring from whence they all flow. This hath been prov'd
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in the foregoing part of this Discourse, where all the Fear, Honour, and Worship, all the Thankfulness, Trust, and Service we owe to our Maker, like so many Streams, issue from this Fountain of Divine Love. And as this is therefore said to be the first, so is it likewise styl'd the great Commandment: And that,

3. In order of Dignity, upon the account of the transcendent Greatness of the Object about which it is conversant; which is no less than God himself, the highest and noblest of all Beings: for tho' all the Commandments have some relation to him, having God for their Author, yet there is none that so immediately refers to him as this of Love, having his Divine Nature and Perfections for its Object, which give it a Value and Pre-eminence above the rest.

4. This is call'd the first and great Commandment, on the account of the Largeness and Comprehensiveness of it, because it contains all other Graces that have any relation unto God.

And as all Moral Virtues are said to be knit together in Prudence, so all Theological Graces are join'd and meet in this Divine Love: for which reason it is sometimes call'd the *Old Commandment*, because it was from the beginning; sometimes a *New Commandment*, because renew'd and re-inforc'd by Christ; sometimes *all the Commandments*, because it comprizes and runs thro' them all; the Love of God being the great Wheel that moves all our Obedience to him, which is therefore call'd *the first and great Commandment*.

5. On the Account of the Influence it has upon all other Parts and Acts of Religion, which receive all their Worth and Acceptance intirely from this: for where the Love of God is, there every thing, even the meanest Services are accepted; but where that is wanting, nothing, even the greatest and most solemn Performances, can find any liking or acceptance with him. So the Apostle declares at large concerning Charity, in 1 Cor. 13.

Lastly, the Love of God is *the great Commandment* upon the account of its Duration, which is permanent and everlasting: for tho' *Prophecies may fail*, and *Tongues may cease*, and all other *Knowledge may be done away*; yea, tho' other Graces of the Spirit may have an end, as Faith which will be swallow'd up in Vision, and Hope which will end in Fruition; yet *Charity will never fail*, and the *Love of God*

God abideth for ever: 'twill go with us into the other World, and there make up a great part of our Felicity.

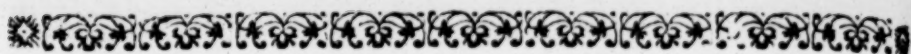
To draw to a Conclusion: Since the *Love of God* is in all these respects the *first and the great Commandment*, let us all in the

First place, as we are here taught, *love the Lord our God with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, and with all our Mind*; which contains and leads to the whole Duty we owe to him. To this end let us frequently meditate on the transcendent Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Majesty, which render him infinitely lovely in himself; but especially on his superlative Bounty and Goodness, which make him in the highest measure amiable unto us; and we shall find it difficult to resist such powerful Charms. But because too many flatter themselves that they love God, and would think themselves unworthy to live, should they do otherwise, it will be requisite to try the Truth and Sincerity of it. Now the best Test and Touchstone hereof are God's Commandments; for as a Tree is best known by its Fruit, so is our Love best discern'd by the Effects of it. Bring then your Lives and Actions to the Rule of God's Commandments: if they are conformable to this, 'tis a good sign that the Love of God dwelleth in you; if it be otherwise, deceive not yourselves, there is no Truth in it.

This, our Saviour himself hath made the trial of it, John 14. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*. And St. John assures us, that *this is the Love of God, that we walk after his Commandments*; 1 John 5. 3.

But since sad Experience teaches, that the World is apt to take too great a Possession of our Hearts, and to draw them from God by the force of its Charms and Temptations, we are to watch against all the Poms and Vanities of it; but above all, we are to put up our Prayers unto God, that he would arm us against all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; that he would plant his Fear, and shed abroad his Love into our Hearts: and by thus loving him here, we shall live with him for ever hereafter.





DISCOURSE XXVI.

MAT. xxii. 39, 40.

And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself: On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

I Shew'd in my last, *our Duty to God*; which our Saviour in the foregoing Verse summ'd up in *the Love of him*. I come now

To *our Duty to our Neighbour*, which is here compriz'd likewise in *the Love of him*. As we shall see in the

Next Question in the Catechism; which is, *What is thy Duty to thy Neighbour?*

The Answer whereunto is, *To love my Neighbour as my Self*.

And that will include and draw on the other things after mention'd, viz. *To do unto all Men as I would they should do unto me. To love, honour, and succour my Father and Mother. To honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him. To submit myself to all my Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters. To order myself lowly and reverently to all my Betters. To hurt no body in Word or Deed; to be true and just in all my Dealings; to keep my Hands from Picking and Stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering; to keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity; not to covet or desire other Mens Goods, but to learn and labour truly to get my own Living, and to do my Duty in that State of Life wherein it shall please God to call me.*

These are the principal Heads of the Duty we owe to one another, all which are compriz'd in these few words, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*; which is here said to be *the second Commandment, and like unto the first*.

'Tis the second Commandment, in the order of Number and of Dignity; and 'tis like unto the first, in respect of the Authority that commands it, which is the same in both; and likewise in respect of the Extent and Comprehensiveness

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comprehensiveness of it. For as the first contains our whole Duty to God, so this second contains our whole Duty to our Neighbour; which will appear by considering the several Parts of it, as before rehears'd. And,

1. The Love of our Neighbour wills us to *do unto all Men as we would they should do unto us.* This is a Dictate of Nature, and a Principle taught and suggested to us by the common Reason of Mankind, who have all own'd the Equity, Justice, and Usefulness of it. And therefore we find the wiser Heathens commending and practising of it, from no higher Light than that of Nature and Reason.

But our Blessed Saviour, to urge and enforce the Obligation of it upon all his Followers, hath adopted it into Christianity, and made it a Principle of his Reveal'd Religion, as may be seen in his divine Sermon on the Mount, *Mat. 7. 12. Luke 6. 31.* Now this Rule directs us to substitute ourselves in one another's places, and to make our Neighbour's Case our own; and then consider, what we could reasonably desire in their Circumstances, and so to make that the Measure of our Actions and Dealings with them, that now labour under them. This will shew us the Equity and Reasonableness of this Golden Rule, of doing as we would be done by, and effectually persuade to all Acts of Justice and Charity to one another in all Conditions.

Moreover, this will convince us of the Goodness of God, in laying such easy and equitable Commands upon us, in making our own Desires the Standard of our Doings to others: So that he may justly reason with us, as he did of old with the *Israelites*, *Are not my ways equal?* in requiring you to do no more to others, than you would desire yourselves in their Circumstances, which may happen to be yours you know not how soon. *And are not your ways unequal,* if you should think or do otherwise? Again,

2. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will teach us to love, honour, and succour our Father and Mother. The word Neighbour here extends to all Mankind; in the first Rank whereof we are to reckon our Parents both Natural and Civil, who next under God are to have the greatest share of our Honour and Affection. Nature itself inclines us to love our Parents, to whom we stand related in the nearest Tie of Consanguinity and Blood, being *Bone of their Bone, and Flesh of their Flesh.*

And

And this Love is to be express'd by all the Tokens of Honour, Reverence, and Obedience to them; looking upon them as the Instruments of our Being, and paying them our Respects accordingly: but above all, we are to succour and relieve them in case of Want and Necessity; considering the great care they took of us in our Infancy and helpless State, which because we cannot sufficiently requite, we are to pray to God to multiply his Blessings upon them. This all Parents desire and expect from their Children, and therefore they should be careful to set them a good Example by paying it to their own, which is but to do as we would be done by, and to love our Neighbour as ourselves: they that do otherwise, are void of natural Affection, which is a sad Symptom of a reprobate Mind.

3. The Love of our Neighbour obliges us to *honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him*; for these too come under the style and notion of Neighbour, whose higher Station requires us to love them not only as, but for ourselves, our own as well as others Welfare being wrapt up and concern'd in theirs. The Prince's Honour is the People's Safety, for *he is the Breath of our Nostrils*, and the Protector of our Lives and Fortunes; the Commonwealth lives and breathes in him.

If he be safe and prosperous, the Subjects are happy; if any Misfortune betide him, they are soon involv'd in Misery and Confusion; his Fall, like that of the tall Cedars, shaking the whole Earth. So that to love him, is to love ourselves; and the Honour we pay him, is repay'd again in the Benefit and Comfort of his Protection. And therefore the Apostle wills us to *pray for Kings and all that are in Authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty*; which cannot be done without them: for which reason, St. Peter hath coupled together *the Fear of God, and the Honour of the King*. And St. Paul minds us to be *subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates*; which is no more than what we ourselves would expect in their Conditions.

4. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, requires us to *submit to all our Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters*: for all these are appointed for our good, and attend continually on this very thing: to submit to them, is to hearken to their Instructions, and to bear their Corrections. As for Governors, they are said to be *the Ministers of God to us for Good*, ordain'd for the Punish-

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ment of Evil-doers, and the Praise of them that do well.

As for *Teachers*, they are such as bring up others in the Knowledge of any useful Arts or Literature, as Tutors or Instructors. Spiritual Pastors are those whom Christ hath set apart to guide and to feed his Flock.

Masters are such as have Authority over others, as their Servants and Dependents. All which in their several Stations and Functions are to be own'd and submitted to; that is, Subjects are to yield to the Power and Punishments of Governors in the State; Scholars to the Doctrine and Discipline of Teachers in the Schools or Places of Education; the People to the Directions and Admonitions of Spiritual Pastors and Ministers in the Church; and Servants to the Commands and Counsels of Masters in the Family. Which things the Love of our Neighbour and ourselves must engage us to, both for the publick and private Good of one another. These Lessons will be better learnt by the next Duty we owe to our Neighbour; which is,

5. *To order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our Betters.*

By our Betters here we are to understand,

(1.) All that are above us in any Office either in Church or State.

(2.) All those that are before us in Age and Experience. And,

Lastly, All that are above us in Parts or Learning.

All these, in their several kinds, have a sort of Superiority over us, and so are to be look'd upon and accounted our Betters.

But what is it to order ourselves lowly and reverently towards them? Why! that in general imports an humble, decent, and respectful Behaviour to them. More particularly,

For those that are above us in any Office of Ruling and Teaching of us, we are to honour their Persons, and receive their Instructions. So we are commanded to reverence *all that are in Authority*, and to count those worthy of double Honour that labour in the Word and Doctrine, and to esteem them highly for their Works sake.

For those that are before us in Age and Experience, we are to shew a due respect to them, as the Directors of Youth, and to listen to their Counsel and Admonitions.

Lastly, For those that are above us in Parts and Learning, we are to pay a due deference to their better Judgments; having an inward Regard to them in our Minds, and

and outwardly demeaning ourselves towards them with Humility and Obedience; not setting up our weak Opinions above theirs, or preferring our Humours and vain Conceits before their greater Wisdom.

These things the great Virtue of Christian Modesty, and the good Order and Government of the World exact from us, and are but what we ourselves, in their Places and Circumstances, would expect from others.

6. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will teach us to *hurt no body by Word or Deed*; that is, not to say or do any thing to the prejudice of any other Person, and that because we ourselves are most unwilling to receive any Injury from them. Now Men, you know, may be hurted several ways; as in their Body, by Violence and Bloodshed; in their Soul, by creating to it any unnecessary Grief or Trouble; in their Goods, by Rapine and Oppression; in their Name, by Tale bearing and Backbiting, and the like: from all which the loving our Neighbour as ourselves is the most effectual Preservative, since none can wish so ill to himself, as to desire such Usage; but are rather mov'd to complain and seek redress when 'tis done to them. And since all Men are fond of the Health and Welfare of their Bodies, of the Quiet and Comfort of their Souls, of the Prosperity of their Estates, and the Preservation of their good Names; to love our Neighbour as ourselves, will be the best Motive to promote these things in all others: for *Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour*.

7. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will teach Men to *be true and just in all their Dealings*. There is none but desires Truth in Mens Words, Faithfulness in Promises, Fidelity in Trusts, Justice in Bargains and Contracts, and Honesty in all Dealings, where themselves are concern'd. Now 'tis but to pay that to others, which we expect from them, and all these things will be effectually secur'd and practis'd in our Intercourse with one another. We shall then render to every one their Dues, because we look for the same ourselves from all others; and shall be unwilling to over-reach and defraud any, which of all things we abhor should be done to us.

8. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will cause us to *bear no Malice or Hatred in our Heart*. Malice is such an evil Disposition of Mind, as prompts Men to the doing all possible Mischief: 'tis call'd in Latin *Malitia*, that is, not only wicked, but Wickedness itself, being the highest kind

kind of Wickedness in the World; for 'tis a Delight in working Evil to another, tho a Man get nothing by it himself: which is the Humour of the Devil, to labour hard, not to bring any Good to himself, but Mischief and Ruin to others. *Hatred* is a Vice much of the same Nature, and hath much the same Effects; for it is griev'd at any Good that happens to another, and rejoices in every Calamity that befalls him. 'Tis a lasting Anger, accompany'd with Desires and Designs of Revenge, and ends many times in Murder and Bloodshed. Now a true Love of our Neighbour as ourselves will root out these black and mischievous Passions, which are but a Torment to those who harbour them. They cannot dwell in a Breast where Love and Virtue reign, no more than Fire and Water, Light and Darkness, can abide together. And such as give way to them, are left by the Holy Spirit of God, and led only by the accursed Crew of the evil and envious Spirits.

9. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will *keep our Hands from picking and stealing*. This Virtue will give us such a Sense of one another's Property, as will not suffer us to invade it in the smallest things, and much less in greater and weightier matters. The Portion allotted to every one by the Laws of the Country, is what God himself, by his Deputies, hath assign'd to them; and as we would not have any to diminish our Stock, or break in upon our Goods by the unjust ways of Theft and Robbery, so ought we to be equally tender of the Rights and Properties of others, not using our Hands in taking any thing from them, nor defiling our Fingers with any unjust Gain. Yea, we must first extinguish the Love of God and our Neighbour, and put out the Light even of natural Reason and Equity, before we can make so bold with any thing that is another's.

10. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will *keep our Tongues from Evil-speaking, Lying, and Slandering*. The Tongue was given us to set forth the Glory of God, and to set forward the Good of our Neighbour: and when 'tis us'd to those Ends, 'tis truly styl'd *the Glory of a Man*; but when 'tis us'd to the contrary ways, of dishonouring God, and disparaging our Neighbour, it then becomes a Shame and a Reproach to him. And as a true Love to God will keep us from all ways of dishonouring him; so a true Love to our Neighbour will restrain us from all the ways of vilifying and defaming him. Of the latter of which we have three ways here mention'd: By *Evil-speaking*, that is,

by lessening or detracting from any : By *Lying*, that is, by falsifying in Words and Promises : By *Slandering*, that is, by raising or spreading evil Reports of him. All these are gross Abuses of Speech ; and our Saviour tells us, that of all such *idle and evil Words we must give an account at the last Day*. Now a true Love to our Neighbour as ourselves, will help to take out the Sting and Venom of the Tongue, by considering our own Unwillingness to be under the Lash of it ; and so to avoid all that rash Judging, Lying, and Slandering of others, which ourselves should be loth to receive or bear from them.

II. To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will help to *keep our Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity*. A true Love to ourselves will teach us to preserve the Health of our Bodies and the Peace of our Souls, by a temperate Use of God's Creatures, and an unspotted Chastity ; and likewise to avoid the contrary Vices, that tend to the hurt and impairing of either. And if we bear the same or like Affection to our Neighbour as we do to ourselves, we shall tender the Welfare of his Body and Soul as we do our own, and not draw him into the Vices of Intemperance, Drunkenness, or Uncleaness, which are so pernicious to both.

Lastly, To love our Neighbour as ourselves, will teach us *not to covet or desire other Mens Goods, but to learn and labour truly to get our own Living, and to do our Duty in that State of Life unto which it shall please God to call us*. The Sense whereof is, that this will keep not only our Hands from picking and stealing, but our Hearts from all inordinate coveting or hankering after any thing that is another's ; but rather to use our utmost Diligence and Industry in the Business of some lawful Calling, to get a true and honest Livelihood of our own : And if it shall please God to call us to any Office or Employment publick or private, faithfully to discharge the Duty of it, and to *exercise ourselves therein, to keep a Conscience void of Offence both towards God and towards Men*.

Thus we see the whole of our Duty sum'd up in this one word *Love*, the best and noblest of all the Passions ; and how truly our Saviour styl'd it, *The fulfilling of the Law* : the Love of God containing and constraining us to all that we owe to him ; and the Love of our Neighbour including and drawing on all the Parts of our Duty to him : Both which are imply'd in the

Disc. 26. *Of the Love of our Neighbour.* 547

Last Words of our Text, *On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*: that is, these two Precepts are not only agreeable to all the Doctrine deliver'd in the Law and the Prophets, but likewise comprize all the Duties requir'd by them. For all that the Law and the Prophets have said in the Old Testament, I may add also, all that the Gospel and the Apostles have said in the New, concerning believing in God, fearing, worshipping, trusting, honouring, and obeying of him; and if there be any other, 'tis all comprehended in this Saying, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength.* And all that they have said concerning Justice, Honesty, and Charity to our Neighbour, in this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Thou shalt not covet*; and if there be any other Commandment, 'tis briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, Rom. 13. 9.

And now since the whole Duty of Man is compriz'd in the Love of God and our Neighbour, what remains but that we labour to fix in our Hearts the Love of both; first, loving God for himself, and then our Brethren for his sake; giving him what he often calls for, our whole Heart, Soul, and Mind, not alienating any part of them from him, to whom of right they belong, nor dividing them between God and Mammon, which tends to a total withdrawing them from him. In a word, Let us enkindle in our Breasts here these Sparks of Love to God and our Neighbour, that they may improve into a celestial Fire, and lead us at last to live for ever in the unquenchable Flames of Divine Love: Which God grant, &c.



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A PRACTICAL
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OF THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism :
CONTAINING
The *LORD'S PRAYER*.

Mat. 6. 9. *After this manner pray ye, Our
Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.

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The PREFACE.



S God Almighty has the sole Right to rule and govern us, so has he the sole Power to protect and provide for us: for the one, he has given us his Laws to direct our Lives; for the other, he expects our Prayers to obtain his Blessing.

For tho he be both able and willing to supply all our Wants, and has promis'd to grant all that is needful and convenient for us; yet he hath suspended all upon the Condition of asking, and hath declar'd that he will be sought unto for these things. And indeed this is not only an easy and reasonable Service, but a fit and proper means for that end; Prayer being an Acknowledgment of the Divine Power and Readiness to help us, and likewise a Testimony of our Duty and Dependence upon him.

But because of ourselves we know not how or what to pray for as we ought, our Blessed Saviour, who was best able, hath given us an exact Model of Devotion, known by the Name of The Lord's Prayer, which the Reader will here find in some measure explain'd to him.

It was twice deliver'd by Christ himself; once of his own accord in his Sermon on the Mount, and after that at the request of the Disciples, who desiring him to teach them to pray, as John taught his Disciples, gave them this, not only as a Pattern, but a perfect Form of Prayer; which hath accordingly been so used in the Christian Church ever since. And this hath set both the Lawfulness and the Expediency of Forms of Prayer above the reach of all just Doubt or Contradiction; for hereby our Saviour has taught us, to take to ourselves words in our solemn Addresses unto God, and not to depend upon present Conceptions, nor leave so weighty a Duty to sudden Suggestions and Expressions. Ted, by dictating

this Sacred Form, and directing his Disciples to use it, he has prefer'd premeditated and well-digested Words before extemporary Effusions; and thereby advanc'd orderly and well-compos'd Forms above the irregular Devotion of gifted Brethren.

Moreover, We may observe in this Prayer the Succinctness and Brevity here us'd and prescrib'd by our Saviour, whereby a greater than Solomon hath will'd, that our Words unto God should be few. To this end, he has order'd our Petitions to be put up in general Terms, leaving the distinct Matter, Manner, and Measure of disposing them to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, who knoweth what things we have need of before we ask, and is ever ready to do more abundantly than we can either ask or think. By this he has taught us (as a great Divine hath observ'd) that piece of good Manners, not to be tediously punctual and particular in our Prayers; as if God needed Information, or were apt to forget or neglect the Particulars of our Good, without minding of him.

I shall add no more, but Advice to all good Christians to a due Esteem and daily Use of this excellent Form, always tacking this perfect Prayer to their imperfect Petitions; which will render them the more pleasing to God the Father, when they are offer'd up in the Name and Words of his Beloved Son, in whom alone he is well pleased.

Farewel.

The Lord's Prayer.

DEAR Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

A



A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION of the Second Part of the Church- Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

2 COR. iii. 5.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God.

AFTER the Rehearsal of the Ten Commandments, together with a brief Account of our Duty to God and our Neighbour contain'd in them, the Catechist is directed in the next words thus to bespeak the Catechumen; *My good Child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or to serve him without his special Grace, which you must therefore learn to call for by diligent Prayer.*

In which words the Party catechiz'd is instructed in three great and important Lessons.

1st, His utter Inability of himself to keep the Law of God: *Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself.*

2^{dly},

2dly, The Necessity of God's Grace to assist him in the Performance of it, in those words, *Nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or serve him, without his special Grace.*

3dly, The proper way and means of obtaining this Divine Grace, *which you must learn always to call for by diligent Prayer.* All which being weighty and necessary Truths, must be particularly handled. And,

1. I must begin with the Acknowledgment of our utter Impotence and Inability of ourselves to keep the Law of God: *Know this, &c.* Of this I shall treat from these words of the Apostle, *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves:* Where the Apostle tells us, that we are so far from being able of ourselves to keep the Law of God, that we cannot so much as *think any thing of ourselves.* And certainly if we cannot think a good Thought, we must be more unable to do a good Action; and if we cannot by our own Strength do one good Action, how much less can we keep the whole Law?

In treating therefore of these words, it will be necessary,

First, To convince Men of this their utter Impotence and Inability to keep the Commandments of God.

Secondly, To inquire whence this Inability proceeds: And,

Lastly, To consider what use we are to make of it.

First, To convince us of this Inability, we have not only the express Testimony of Holy Scripture, but likewise many Examples of the Failings and Infirmities of the best Men recorded in it; all which are back'd and confirm'd to us by our own sad and woeful Experience. The holy Scriptures in sundry Places hold forth this great and sad Truth: Our Blessed Saviour told the Jews, that tho Moses gave them the Law, yet none of them ever kept it, John 7. 19. Solomon declares, that *the Righteous Man falleth seven times a day*, Prov. 24. 16. And elsewhere checks all vain Boasts and Pretences to Innocency, Prov. 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* St. James tells us, that *in many things we offend all*, Jam. 3. 2. And St. John, that *if we say we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us*, 1 John 1. 8. St. Paul assures us, that *the Law concludes all Men under Sin*; meaning, that none ever came up to the Exactness of its Precepts, but that *all have sinned, and come short of the Glory* of

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of God, Rom. 3. 23. All which, and many more Places to this purpose, plainly prove our Impotence and Inability to keep the Law of God.

But beside these express Testimonies of Scripture, we have many Examples of human Frailty recorded in it, that may easily convince us of the Shortness and Imperfection of our Obedience. *David, a Man after God's own Heart*, is recorded for the Breach of two great Commandments, by Adultery and Murder: both which we find him often confessing and bewailing before God, and thereby wash'd away the Guilt of them with the Tears of Repentance. *Solomon*, who is justly fam'd for the greatest and wisest of Men, was so far from keeping the Law of God, that he fell into Idolatry, which is in effect the breaking of all the Commandments. In the New Testament we find *St. Peter*, who was the first and chiefest of the Apostles, so far short of Perfection, that he fell into great and grievous Enormities, denying his Master three times with bitter Oaths and Execrations; which likewise cost him many a Tear, and made him weep bitterly, Mat. 26. 74, 75. *St. Paul* too, who was one of the greatest of Saints, acknowledges himself the greatest of Sinners, frequently confessing his Weakness, and saying, that of himself he could do nothing: *for in me, (saith he) that is, in my Flesh, dwells no good thing; and when I would do good, evil is present with me*: Rom. 7. 18. And if these great and eminent Saints were so sensible of their Inability to do the Will of God, how much more ought we to own and lament our greater Impotence?

But if we should think or judge otherwise of ourselves, our daily Failings and Miscarriages would apparently confute us; *for in many things we offend all*, omitting what we ought to do, and doing what should be left undone; for which reason our Church hath taught us every day to confess, *That that we have err'd and stray'd from God's way like lost Sheep, following too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts*, continually offending against his Holy Laws; from thence acknowledging that we have not Health or Strength enough in us to keep God's Commandments. But,

Secondly, Whence comes this Impotence or Inability to do the Will of God? Why this proceeds,

Partly, from the original Corruption and Depravedness of our Nature contracted by the Fall of our first Parents. And, Partly,

Partly, likewise from the Evil Suggestions and Temptations of our ghostly Enemies.

(1.) I say, this proceeds from the original Corruption of our Nature, contracted by the Fall of our first Parents: This is the prime fundamental Cause of all Sin and Wickedness, and particularly of that Averseness to Good, and Proneness to Evil, that is visible in all the Sons of Men. Indeed God made Man at first in his own Image, which consisted in Knowledge, Righteousness, and true Holiness; he endow'd him with Faculties suited to the Work for which he design'd him, making him in some measure Partaker of the Divine Nature, and in all things conformable to the Divine Will. In this State of Purity and Perfection, in which he came out of God's hand, he was able to keep the whole Law, and had Strength enough to do all that was requir'd of him.

But tho God made Man upright (saith Solomon) yet he perverted his way, and found out many Inventions, Eccles. 7. 29. Our first Parents, by disobeying their Maker, lost both their Strength and Innocence together, they craz'd all their Faculties, and deriv'd down Misery and Weakness to their Posterity ever since: *How weak is thine Heart* (saith God) *seeing thou hast done these things?* Ezek. 16. 30. The first Transgression hath brought a Weakness upon Mankind, and enfeebled all their Powers: The Understanding, that was once fill'd with Light and Knowledge, is now overspread with Darkness and Ignorance; the Will that was upright and conformable to the Will of God, is become crooked and perverse, and bent only upon what is evil; the Affections that were all orderly, and plac'd upon right Objects, are now misplac'd and disorder'd, being eagerly carry'd where they should not. In a word, the whole Man is corrupt, and the very Heart and Conscience defil'd: which hath brought an Impotence upon the Soul, and disabled it to every good Work. Hence it comes to pass, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing that is good; the Imaginations of the Heart, in this degenerate State, being evil, only evil, and that continually. Which Corruption of Nature is the first and great Cause of this Inability.

(2.) This proceeds partly from the evil Suggestions and Temptations of our Spiritual Enemies; who, working upon the Corruption of our Nature, encrease our Weakness, and render us both unwilling and unable to do the Will of God.

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These daily assault and solicit us to Evil, plying us with their Temptations, whereby they impair our Strength, and create this Impotence. Satan, the great Enemy of Mankind, is still importuning and labouring to circumvent us; he hath his Wiles, his Devices, and his fiery Darts to wound and weaken us: this subtle Serpent beguil'd our first Parents even in Paradise, and if he prevail'd so far upon them in their State of Innocence, how much greater advantage hath he now upon us in this State of Impotence?

The World too is very busy in laying Baits and Snares for us; that hath Smiles to allure, and Frowns to affright us from our Duty: both which must mightily encrease the difficulty of Obedience, and render us very feeble and unable to perform it. But beside these,

We have an Enemy in our own Bosom; the Flesh is daily struggling and tempting us to evil: *In me, that is, in my Flesh* (saith the Apostle) *there dwelleth no good thing: for the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; so that when I would do good, evil is still present with me:* Rom. 7. And if that great Apostle struggled with those Difficulties, that made him cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin!* how much more may we groan under the Sense of our greater Impotence? This may suffice to convince us of our own Insufficiency, and to learn us this Lesson of the Catechism, that we can do nothing of ourselves, and much less walk in the ways of God's Commandments by our own natural Strength.

But are the Laws of God impossible to be kept? To what purpose then are all the Exhortations to keep the Commandments? Does not *Solomon* bid us to *fear God and keep his Commandments*? And does not a greater than *Solomon* make this the great Mark and Touchstone of all true Love to him? *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* And have both these put us upon an impossible Task? Yea, to show this not to be impracticable, do we not read that *Zachary and Elizabeth walk'd in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*? And how can this consist with that utter Inability which the Catechism here charges upon human Nature?

In answer to this, I say, That tho we cannot keep the Commandments in a strict legal Sense, or come up to that perfect and exact Obedience they require from us; yet we may and ought to keep them in that qualify'd evangelical Sense,

Sense, which Christ in his Gospel hath promis'd to accept: For since the Fall of our first Parents, which brought this Impotence upon us, our gracious God hath been pleas'd to enter into a new Covenant with us, wherein he allows for our Infirmities, and will not be extreme to mark all that we do amiss: he will accept of our hearty Desires and Endeavours to please him, tho they fall short of Perfection, and will take Sincerity for complete Obedience. In this new Covenant he not only allows for, but helps our Infirmities, and offers us those Aids and Assistances of his Holy Spirit, that may enable us to do what our natural Powers cannot perform. In this qualify'd Sense we are to understand all the Precepts that require us to walk in the Commandments of God; which tho we cannot do of ourselves, yet if we have a willing Mind, and do our utmost, we shall not want that Assistance of Divine Grace, that shall supply all the Defects of our sincere Obedience, as will be more fully shew'd hereafter: in the mean time this Discourse may serve,

1st, To check all Pride and Presumption in ourselves, and teach us not to trust to our own Strength, which we see is no better than Weakness. He that presumes of his own Power, and depends upon his own Strength, doth but lean upon a broken Reed, which will certainly deceive and disappoint him; for of ourselves we can do nothing. Of this, the many Instances of human Frailty, as well as our own sad Experience, may abundantly convince. We find *David*, in a high Fit of Presumption, comparing his Strength to a Mountain, and thinking himself as unmoveable as that; *I said in my Prosperity (saith he) I should never be mov'd, thou, Lord, hast made my Mountain so strong.* God did but withdraw a little, and leave him to himself, and he presently saw his Error, and by his many Failings soon found his own Weakness; *Thou hidest thy Face (saith he) and I was troubled*, Psal. 30. 6, 7. *St. Peter* was so confident of his Strength and firm Adherence to our Saviour, that he told him, tho all the World should forsake or deny, yet he would never deny him. Our Saviour did but turn aside, and leave him to the Trial of his Constancy, and he soon shamefully deny'd him; which made him sensible of his Folly, and lament it bitterly with Tears of Repentance: for which reason the Apostle gives this strict Caution, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* This may check all arrogant Conceit of ourselves, and not only

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only keep us from relying upon our own Strength, but make us walk humbly and warily under the Sense of our own Weakness.

2dly, From this Discourse we learn the Vanity of expecting Justification by the Works of the Law: This was the Folly of the *Jews*, and especially of the *Pharisees*, who sought to establish their own Righteousness, and depended upon it for their Justification, affecting a generous kind of Happiness to be achiev'd by the Merit of their own Works, and scorning any such borrow'd and beggarly Felicity, that came like an Alms from the Bounty of Heaven. Against these, we find *St. Paul* frequently arguing in many of his Epistles; telling them, that *by the Works of the Law can no Flesh living be justify'd, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, Rom. 3. 20. The manifold Defects and Imperfections of our Obedience, of which the Law itself may easily convince us, are sufficient to beat down the arrogant Opinion of Merit, to shew us our own Impotence, and to make us seek our Justification from some other. Moreover,

This Discourse may shew us the Error of the *Cathari* or Puritans of old, who pretended to Purity and Perfection here in this Life; and have herein been follow'd by some Sectaries of later Days. But this Pretence confutes itself, and utterly destroys that Purity and Perfection it pretends to: for our thinking or saying that we have no Sin, makes us the greater Sinners; we thereby (as *St. John* tells us) not only *deceive ourselves, but make God a Lyar*: which shews not only the Falshood, but Blasphemy of such Pretences.

Lastly, This Discourse of our Inability to keep God's Commandments, shews us the great need we have of some higher Assistance to that end. And this leads me to the next Lesson of our Catechism; which is the Necessity of Divine Grace to enable us to do our Duty, and to obtain the Reward of it. But of this hereafter.





DISCOURSE II.

2 COR. iii. 5. latter part.

Our Sufficiency is of God.

I Shew'd in my Last our utter Inability of ourselves to keep the Commandments, from those words of the Catechism, *Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself*: Which I confirm'd from those of the Apostle, *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves*. And if not to think a good thing, then surely not to do the Will of God. I proceed now to the next Lesson there taught us, and that is, the Necessity of God's Grace to enable us to perform it; in those words, *Nor to walk in the Commandments of God, or serve him without his special Grace*: which implies, that tho we cannot do these things without the Divine Grace, yet with the Assistance of that we may be enabled to do them: of which I shall treat from these words, *Our Sufficiency is of God*. The foregoing words seem to deny us all kind of Sufficiency either of thinking or doing well; these seem to grant us some sort of both, by minding us of our Sufficiency; both which are easily reconcilable: *We are insufficient of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God*. In speaking to this I must,

First, Endeavour to convince you of this Sufficiency, and shew what it is.

Secondly, Whence it comes, or where we have it. And,

Thirdly, What Use we are to make of it. For the

First, Both the Testimony of Scripture, of Reason, and Experience, may satisfy us of this Sufficiency. The Lord himself told St. Paul, that *his Grace was sufficient for him, that his Strength was made perfect in Weakness*, inasmuch that when he seem'd most weak, then was he strong, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. This made him tell the Corinthians, that *God was able so to make all Grace abound towards them, that they*

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always, having all Sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good Work; 2 Cor. 9. 8.

Indeed, if we consider Mankind as they are in themselves, void of all Grace and Assistance, so they are like a Body without the Soul, lifeless and unactive, and unable to do any thing, as we before observ'd. In this Condition the Apostle represents them as *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. 3. 1. meaning, that they can no more act or move in the ways of God than a dead Man, who is void of all Sense and Motion: so our Saviour told his Disciples, *Without me ye can do nothing*, John 15. 5. And the great Apostle acknowledges so much, that *of himself he could do nothing*. But if we consider Mankind as supported by Divine Grace and Favour, so we find the Case mightily alter'd with them; they who were *dead are alive again unto God*, and they who were *weak become strong*. Hence we find St. Paul, who before acknowledg'd he could do nothing, after declaring, that *he could do all things thro' Christ that strengthen'd him*, Phil. 4. 13. And elsewhere, *tho he could do nothing against the Truth, yet he could do or suffer any thing for it*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. His weakness was by this means turn'd into Strength, and he who was not sufficient to think or do a good thing, was able to perform the hardest Task, and nothing was too difficult or impossible to him.

But as the Holy Scripture, so Reason too may satisfy us of this Sufficiency; without which we might utterly despair of doing our Duty, and be justly discourag'd from setting about it: for who will venture upon any thing, which he knows he has no Ability to perform? Will any attempt to fly in the Air without Wings, or work at a Trade without Hands? No more would any attempt to do any good thing, if it were impossible to perform it. Yea, all the Calls and Exhortations in God's Word to keep his Commandments, to walk in his Laws, and observe his Statutes, do all suppose the Possibility of doing it: for God is no such hard Master, as to expect to *reap where he hath not sowed, or gather where he hath not strowed*. He rescu'd the Israelites out of the Hands of Pharaoh, for laying impossible Tasks upon them, in exacting Brick without Straw; and can we think he will require more of us than we have Power or Strength to perform?

Beside, we have many Examples in Sacred Writ of those that serv'd God acceptably, and walk'd before him to all well-pleasing. *Enoch* is said to have walk'd with God with

a perfect Heart, and thereby *had that Testimony that he pleas'd God*, Heb. 11. 5. *David was a Man after God's own Heart*; and Zachary and Elizabeth are said to have walk'd in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. To which we may add our own Experience, who find that we can and do many things, and might do much more, if we would exert the Power that God hath given us, and not turn the deaf Ear to good Instructions.

All which may abundantly convince us, that we have some kind of Sufficiency or Ability to do what is requir'd of us.

But what is this Sufficiency, whereby we are enabled to do? Why! that is partly natural, und partly spiritual or supernatural.

Of the first sort are those natural Powers and Faculties, whereby we are enabled to know our Duty, and in some measure to observe and practise it. Thus we are endow'd with an Understanding to discern between Good and Evil, with a Will to chuse the one and refuse the other, and with Affections to move and act accordingly; to which ruling Faculties all the inferior and sensitive Powers of Soul and Body are to be subject and subservient: these are implanted in our Nature, and interwoven in the very Frame and Make of our Being, which we are requir'd to exercise and exert according to the Rule of God's Commandments: And hereunto refer the Exhortations, *to work out our own Salvation, to make our Calling and Election sure*, and the like; which call upon us to exercise and employ our natural Powers as far as they will go, to the promoting our own Salvation; that is, to use our Reason and Understanding to knowing, our Will to chusing, our Affections to loving the best things, that may best secure and advance our own Happiness. But because these natural Faculties are unhappily depriv'd, and by the first Transgression have a wrong Biass clap'd upon them, that draws them from their right Objects, and inclines them too much to that which is evil; therefore,

2. We are supply'd with some supernatural Aids and Assistances of the Holy Spirit to renew our Minds, and rectify those crooked and corrupt Inclinations. This spiritual or supernatural Aid is that which in Scripture is often styl'd Grace, and here in the Catechism is call'd special Grace, by which we are to understand not the infusing of any new Habit in an instant, but the Holy Spirit's aiding and con-

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cunning with our natural Powers, and carrying them farther on in their Duty, than their own Strength would reach: for the Holy Ghost does not now overpower our Faculties in any irresistible way, but co-operates with them, helps their Weakness, and, where they fail or come short, supplies them with fresh Succour, to enable them to do what of themselves they cannot perform; it shews them their way, when they are turning out of it either to the right Hand or to the left, and helps them to go on when they are apt to fall or faint in it. This is the *Spirit's helping our Infirmities*, whereby he directs us in our way, and enables us to walk in it, by rectifying our Wills, and supplying the Defects of our Obedience: for which Ends *his Grace is sufficient for us*, being ever ready to assist a willing Mind, and to accept according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. This is our *Sufficiency* here mention'd in the Text, or that *special Grace* mention'd in the Catechism, whereby we are in some measure enabled to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve him. But,

Secondly, Whence comes this Sufficiency, or where may we have it? That the next words of the Text will inform us, *Our Sufficiency is of God*. And this will be evident, by considering,

1st, That our very natural Powers are of God: *He giveth us Life and Breath, and all things*; and 'tis in him we live, move, and have our Being. 'Twas God that inspir'd our Souls with the Breath of Life, and endow'd them with all their Faculties: he form'd our Bodies and gave them all their Powers; so that all the Faculty we have of knowing the Will of God, or doing any thing towards it, is entirely his: for which reason he is said to *work in us both to will and to do according to his good Pleasure*; and elsewhere, to *work all our Works in us and for us*.

2^{dly}, All our supernatural Aids and Assistances are also of God; 'tis he that strengthens our Faith, raiseth our Hope, and increaseth our Charity; these are the Works of his Holy Spirit acting within us, whereby he assists our Weakness, and helps us on farther in the Paths of God's Commandments, than of ourselves we are able to go. This is that Grace of God which is said to be sufficient for us, by which is meant some superadded Strength to our natural Powers, whereby they are rais'd and enabled to

higher Degrees of Virtue and Obedience, than otherwise they could arrive to. In short then, all our Sufficiency, both natural and supernatural, is of God, and all the Powers of Nature and Grace are entirely owing to his Wisdom and Goodness.

This being a matter of great Concernment to us to know, I shall endeavour to illustrate it to you by this Resemblance: An Artificer, in making a Clock or Watch, furnisheth it within with Wheels and Spring, and all other things necessary to its orderly Motion; which being done, he sets it a going of itself, and leaves it to move by the Power and Influence of its own Spring: till by Time or Accident becoming out of order, he repairs the Decays of his own Work, and by his additional Art restores and continues it in its regular Motion. In like manner, the great Artificer of the World made Man upright, and endow'd him with those Faculties, that like so many Wheels and Springs enabled him to move on orderly in the ways of God, till by an unhappy Fall he crack'd and disorder'd his Faculties, and thereby contracted such an Impotence, as disabled him from moving and acting as he could before; whereupon his All-wise Maker graciously repairs the Decay of his Nature, and by the Supplies of his Grace enables him to move and act as he would have him.

By which we see, how *our Sufficiency is of God*, he having given us some natural Powers, which, tho' left to our own Liberty, yet he hath will'd and encourag'd us to use aright; and if we exert these as far as they will go in doing our Duty, we shall be farther assisted, and when they fail, shall receive that superadded Strength, which shall enable us to perform the Will of God in such a manner as will be accepted of him.

This Lesson the Catechism would have all Persons instructed in, not only for the clearing of their Knowledge in this great Truth, but for the good Use and Influence it may have upon their Lives and Conversations: which is the last thing propounded to be spoken to. And,

1. As the Sense of our own Weakness should keep us from all Presumption and trusting to our own Strength; so the Sense of this Sufficiency we have from God, may keep us from Despair, and check all Distrusts of his Grace and Goodness. Tho' we are unable of ourselves to do any thing that is good, yet his Grace we see is sufficient for us; and this is never wanting to our sincere Endeavours, God

Almighty being more ready to give, than we are to ask it of him. This the eminent Servants of Christ have ever acknowledg'd, and we ourselves, by trying the Experiment, would surely find; which should teach us never to presume upon our own Strength, nor at any time to despair of the Divine Grace and Assistance.

2. This Discourse may serve to check the arrogant Conceit of Merit, and teach us to ascribe all that we are, have, or can do, to the Divine Bounty: For if all *our Sufficiency be of God*, then 'tis not of ourselves, and consequently we can have nothing to boast of but our Infirmities, which rather need Pity than deserve a Reward. To merit any thing at God's hands, we must give something which is our own; whereas we have nothing but what we receive from him, being beholden to him for our very Being, and daily depending upon his Bounty. Again,

To merit any thing, we must give something that we do not owe; for no Man merits for paying his Debts, but for doing some good Offices above and beside them: whereas we owe ourselves and all that we have to our Maker, and are indebted to him far more than we can discharge; inasmuch that when we have done our best, *we are but unprofitable Servants*, having *done but our Duty*, and in many things falling short of that too. Beside,

To merit any thing, there must be a proportion between the Work and the Wages; whereas nothing that we have or can do, bears any proportion to the promis'd Reward. In a word, having nothing of our own but Infirmities and Imperfections to pretend to, we can look for nothing but Pity or Punishment.

3. If all our Sufficiency be of God, then let us thankfully own and employ what we have in his Service; this is the way to procure a Blessing upon what we have already, and likewise to obtain more. He that us'd his Talents to his Master's Honour, was commended and rewarded with a larger Share; whereas he that neglected or misemploy'd them, forfeited all, and was with Shame and Infamy depriv'd of it. Which should teach us to beware of mispending our Time, Wealth, or Strength in the Service of Sin, of abusing the Gifts of God, or turning his Grace into Wantonness: But rather let us study to employ the Blessings of Heaven to the Glory of him that gives them; so shall they be multiply'd upon us, and in the end promote our own Glory. Let us use that natural Power and Strength

we have already in keeping of God's Commandments, and then we shall not fail of having more as our need shall require, nor miss at last of the Reward of so doing; for God *will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will be withheld from them that lead a godly Life.*

Lastly, If all our *Sufficiency be of God*, then may we learn hence where to find Grace and Strength *to help in time of need*; and likewise how we may obtain it. But this will lead me to the next thing in our Catechism, which is the Way and Means of obtaining Grace and Strength to keep God's Commandments; and that is, by *calling for it by diligent Prayer.* Of which in the next.

DISCOURSE III.

MAT. vii. 7.

Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd unto you.

HAVING seen our natural Weakness and Inability of ourselves to keep God's Commandments; together with the Fulness and Sufficiency of God's Grace to help and further us in the performance of them: I proceed now, in the third place, to consider the way and means to which our Catechism here directs, for the obtaining of this spiritual Aid and Assistance for the keeping of them: and that is, *To call for it by diligent Prayer.* Of this I shall treat from these words of our Saviour, *Ask, and it shall be given, &c.* where both the Text and Catechism direct to the Duty of Prayer, as the most effectual means of obtaining *Grace to help in time of need.*

As for the Nature and Qualifications of Prayer, the Reader will find them explain'd in the eighteenth Discourse of the first Part of the Catechism, to which I refer him. As for the several parts of Prayer, we find them mention'd by the Apostle in *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.* where we have,

1. Supplications or Petitions for all manner of Good to Body and Soul.

2. Prayers

2. Prayers or Deprecations for the averting of all manner of Evil to both.

3. Thanksgivings for all Mercies both publick and private.

4. Intercessions for all Men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority, and likewise for all others whom we are bound to pray for.

As for the times of Prayer, the Apostle tells us, that must be *continually*, and *without ceasing*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. not that we are always to be upon our Knees, or that we must never cease from the Act of Praying; for that would interfere with other Duties, and hinder us from the Business of our Callings, which we are likewise requir'd to mind and attend to: but that we be always in a due disposition and preparation for this Duty, that we frequently lift up our Hearts unto God, and mingle some pithy and pious Ejaculations with all the Affairs and Business of this Life: But chiefly, that we observe the stated Times and Seasons of Prayer, both in publick, private, and secret; as on the Lord's Day, and other fasting and festival Days, appointed for solemn and publick Prayer; every day for private and family Prayer, in Conformity to the daily Sacrifice appointed by God Almighty, for our daily Wants and Blessings; and at convenient Seasons to *enter our Closets, and shut the Doors, praying to our Father in secret, who hath promis'd to reward us openly*, Mat. 6. 6.

But that which we are here principally to consider, is the benefit and usefulness of Prayer, in order to the attaining of Divine Grace and Assistance, together with the Success and Efficacy of Prayer to those Ends; both which are here declar'd and promis'd by our Blessed Saviour: *Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd unto you.* Where we have

The Duty of Prayer requir'd of us. And,

The Promise of Audience and Acceptance to recommend it to us; both which are here variously expressed. As,

1. 'Tis express'd by *asking*, or *making our Requests known unto God*: In which we are consider'd as humble Supplicants at the Throne of Grace, suing for Mercy and Pardon for past offences, and begging for Power and Strength against them for the future: which we are encourag'd to ask by a Promise of receiving; *Ask, and it shall be given*; and elsewhere, *Ask, that your Joy may be full.*

2. Prayer is here express'd by *seeking*, and so 'tis often styl'd in Scripture, a *seeking unto God*: By this we are re-

presented as lost Creatures that have forfeited the Favour of God, and lost all Power of serving and pleasing of him; and therefore are set upon seeking of God, upon searching and making after him: and the Promise annex'd to this, is the assurance of finding him; *Seek and ye shall find*: for he will be *found of them that seek him*, and will not hide himself from them that *search after him*.

3. Prayer is here express'd by *knocking*: by which we are represented as so many Beggars, knocking at the Gates of Heaven, waiting for a Blessing or Boon to help us. And to this we are encourag'd with a Promise of Admission, *Knock, and it shall be open'd unto you*. Hence Prayer is sometimes styl'd the Key that opens the Gates of Heaven, sometimes the Hand that reaches out Mercy; and by both an *Entrance is administred to us abundantly into the Kingdom of God*. Moreover,

Prayer is sometimes express'd by *calling upon God*, and *crying unto him*; both which have the Promise of being heard annex'd to them: *Call upon me* (says God) *in the time of Trouble, and I will hear thee*, Psal. 50. 12. David cried *unto the Lord, and he heard him*; adding, *that God will hear the Cry of his People, and will save them*.

All which instruct us in the Nature and Efficacy of Prayer, and shew it to be the ordinary Way and Means appointed by God to obtain Grace and Mercy from him.

But how doth Prayer prevail with God? or by what Influence doth it operate towards the attaining his Blessing?

To which I answer,

1. Negatively, It works not by way of Information; for God knows our Necessities before we ask, and needs not to be inform'd of any of our Wants or Desires. With Men indeed this is necessary, who must be acquainted with our Necessities before they can know or relieve them. Men are limited as to Place and Power, and cannot tell what others want or feel, and therefore must have the Condition represented and laid before them ere they can help them. But with God 'tis otherwise, he is every where present, and so is thorowly acquainted with all the Necessities of his Creatures; he searches the Heart, and so knows their Thoughts and Desires long before-hand; insomuch, that as he needs no Information, so that can have no Influence upon the Success of our Petitions. Nor,

2. Does Prayer operate or prevail with God by way of Persuasion: To persuade another, is to incline him to something

thing to which he was before averse ; and this is done by the Arts of Speech, which working upon the Passions, moves him to do that which otherwise he would not. He that does a thing without this, is said to act freely and of his own accord ; but he that does it by Intreaty, or working upon the Affections, is said to be persuaded. This is the usual way of dealing with Men, who by the use of words, many or few, are often drawn to do something, which before they had no mind to. But God is not to be wrought upon this way, he is not to be mov'd by the Arts of Speech, nor prevail'd upon by the dextrous Insinuation and Fluency of a voluble Tongue : he is void of all Passions, and so not to be persuaded by stirring of them ; and being himself the first Mover, cannot be mov'd by any thing without him. To be wrought upon this way, argues Weakness and Imperfection, which must be remov'd from the Divine Nature. He that is persuaded to a thing, is so, because he sees farther into it after than he did before ; whereas God sees all things presently and perfectly, and is not assisted by any Advice or Information. Beside, to be mov'd this way, argues Mutability and Inconstancy : for he that is persuaded to a thing, changes his Mind, and turns to what he was before averse to ; whereas God is unchangeable both in his Nature and Will, and *with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*. So that Prayer cannot operate with God by any Arts of Persuasion. Nor yet,

3. Does it prevail by Importunity, or wearying him into the Grant of our Suit. The unjust Judge indeed was prevail'd upon to do a Widow right by the restless Importunity of her Suit ; *Because she troubles me* (says he) *I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me*, Luke 18. 4, 5. Thus many importunate Beggars are succour'd, not so much for their Wants, or their Worth, as merely to be rid of them ; Men being tir'd with the vehemence and importunity of their Request, and so relieving them only to relieve themselves. But God is not thus to be wearied by our Importunity ; being above and without all Passions, he cannot be disturb'd by the Loudness or Vehemence of any Address : Nothing can discompose the perfect Calmness and Serenity of his Mind, nor can the most restless and repeated Importunity weary him into a Concession of what we ask. And if the success of our Petitions be at any time ascrib'd in Scripture to the fervency or frequency of them, it must be understood as spoken after the manner of Men, and let us know

know the Effect and Issue of such Prayers ; which tho they cannot excite any Passion or Perturbation in God, who is perfectly free from them, yet will they find the same Effect as if he felt these things, and he will stand affected towards us, as we are wont to be when acted by them. By which it appears, that our Prayers prevail not with God, either by Information, Persuasion, or Importunity ; which things, tho of great use and necessity in our applications to Men, have yet no force or efficacy at all in our Addresses to God.

But how then doth Prayer work upon God, and prevail with him for the procuring of Grace and Mercy from him ?

Why this proceeds not from any Worth in the Persons that offer it, nor yet from any Virtue in the Prayer itself that is offer'd up ; but merely as 'tis the Condition upon which God hath promis'd and oblig'd himself, to grant the Grace we stand in need of: So that if we fulfil the Condition upon which he hath suspended all his Blessings, and call upon him in the way which himself hath appointed for the Supply of all our Wants, he is in a manner bound by his own Word to give the good Things we ask of him. *If we confess our Sins* (says the Apostle) *he is just and righteous to forgive them* : and having freely promis'd, *That if we ask, we shall receive ; if we seek, we shall find ; if we knock, it shall be open'd to us* : his own Truth and Faithfulness stand engag'd to make it good, and to do all that for us which we cannot do for our selves. In short then, Prayer prevails not by its own Worth, but by the sole Virtue of the Divine Promise ; and 'tis not any Act or Merit of ours, but God's Free-Grace and Goodness that gives it all its Efficacy.

But why is Prayer above all other Duties singled out as the Condition upon which God is pleas'd to promise and bestow all his Blessings ? In answer to this,

Tho (as a Learned Divine has observ'd) God's sovereign Will and Pleasure be a sufficient Reply to this and such-like Inquiries ; yet there is something in Prayer that makes it more especially fitted to this End than any other Duty ; and that because 'tis the most signal and peculiar Act of Dependence that we can express to our Maker, and therefore must best qualify us for his Favour ; for to pray to another does naturally imply these two things :

I. That

1. That the Person praying stands in need of something which he cannot do for himself.

2. That the Person pray'd to, is both able and willing to do it for him; and in these two consist that which we properly call our Dependence upon God: for he that is truly sensible of his own Weakness and Inability to help himself, and is withal fully perswaded of the infinite Power and Readiness of him he prays to, to supply his Wants; and upon this Persuasion addresses to him in the way that himself hath prescrib'd to that purpose; plainly expresses his Duty and Dependence upon him. And indeed, were it left to ourselves to prescribe the Conditions of the Divine Favour and Bounty, we could not conceive a more easy and proper Means to derive his Blessing upon us, than such a temper of Mind as makes us to own our own Insufficiency, and to rely intirely upon the Goodness and Sufficiency of our Maker.

But how must our Prayers be qualify'd, that they may obtain the desir'd Effect, and prevail for Grace to help in time of need? This must be known and observ'd too: for tho' our Saviour here puts us upon *asking, seeking, and knocking*, with a promise of Success in them all: yet the Apostle tells of some that *ask, and receive not, because they ask amiss*; and we read of others that *seek, and find not, because they seek not aright*; and likewise of a third sort, who *knock* without being open'd to, but instead of that are excluded for *Workers of Iniquity*.

What then is that *diligent Prayer* prescrib'd in our Catechism for the obtaining this Divine Grace? Why, by that we are to understand,

1. Sincere and hearty Prayer, in opposition to all hypocritical and Lip-Devotion: God Almighty *requires Truth in the inward Parts*; he accepts and answers the pious Breathings of a devout Heart, and rewards them too with the desir'd Blessing; but he hates the vain affected Harangues of the Hypocrite, and instead of a Blessing, answers them only with Repulse and a Curse. And therefore we find him sharply rebuking those that *drew nigh him with their Lips, when their Hearts were far from him*; willing them to come with a faithful and true Heart, if they hope to find Mercy from him.

2. Diligent Prayer must be frequent or constant; not giving it over thro' weariness and wantonness, but *continuing instant in Prayer with all perseverance*, being always in a readiness

readiness for this Duty, and observing the stated and solemn Times of Devotion. This is to pray continually, when we daily renew our Petitions, and cease not in all our Affairs to ask his Blessing.

3. Diligent Prayer is fervent and affectionate, in opposition to Coldness and Lukewarmness; 'tis *the effectual fervent Prayer of the Righteous Man that availeth much*: They are strong Cries and Tears that pierce the Heavens, and enter the Ears of God; whereas he turns the deaf Ear to cold and heartless Petitions, and instead of blessing, spues the lukewarm Person out of his Mouth.

4. That our Prayers may be successful, they must be offer'd up in Faith, and with full Assurance of being heard. So St. James tells us, if we would ask so as to receive, we *must ask in Faith, without wavering; for he that wavers is like a Wave of the Sea, driven of the Wind and tossed*: and let not such think to obtain any thing at the hands of God. For all Doubting supposes a Distrust either of his Power or Will to help us; both which make him a Liar, and where they are harbour'd, must needs mar the success of our Petitions: for which reason we are bid to lift up clean hands without wrath or doubting.

5. A successful Prayer must be tender'd with Humility, for *God resisteth the Proud, and gives his Grace only to the Humble*. He hath regard to the humble and contrite Heart, that is sensible of its own Wants and Weakness, but beholds the Proud afar off, who vainly thinks he needs no Assistance. This is evident in the poor Publican, whose plain *Lord have Mercy upon me a Sinner!* prevail'd more for his Justification, than all the vain-glorious Vaunts of the proud Pharisee.

Lastly, Diligent Prayer is attended with the use of all good Means appointed for our own Succour; for 'tis in vain to cry, God help! without putting to our own Strength, or applying ourselves to those Instruments that are ordain'd of God to that End: as has been shew'd elsewhere, *Part I.*

From this Discourse we may learn,

1. Our own Vileness and Unworthiness, who can neither do or deserve any thing of ourselves towards our own Salvation; *By Grace are ye saved* (says the Apostle) *for 'tis the Gift of God.*

2. We learn hence the great Goodness of God in dispensing his Blessings upon such easy Terms; 'tis, we see, but ask

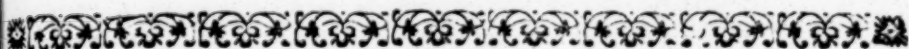
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ask and have; *Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be open'd to you.* And upon what milder Terms could we expect such inestimable Favours? *Open thy Mouth wide* (says God) *in Prayer, and I will fill it.* And certainly, they deserve to go without the Favours of Heaven, who think them not worth the asking.

To conclude then, Let us learn always to call for them by diligent Prayer, which we are to put up in the Name of Christ, and for such things only as are agreeable to his Will.



DISCOURSE IV.

LUKE xi. 2.

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

WE have seen the Efficacy of Prayer towards the supply of all our Wants, how it operates with God for the obtaining of Mercy, and how it must be qualify'd to render it effectual to that End. It remains then,

That I proceed to the Lord's Prayer, which the Catechism in the next words calls upon the Catechumen to rehearse, in these words, *Let me hear you say the Lord's Prayer.* To which

The Answer is, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.*

But before I enter upon the Explication of this Divine Form, 'twill be requisite to premise a few things for the better clearing our way to it. And here the

First and great Thing to be observ'd, is the Author of this Prayer, which is no other than *the Son of God*; yea, one that is himself *God blessed for ever*, call'd therefore *the Lord's Prayer*. This Son of God lay in the *Bosom of his Father*; and being thereby thorowly acquainted with his Mind and Will, could best tell what was fittest for us to ask, and for him to give.

Moreover, this Son of God became the Son of Man too, that he might the better succour and instruct us: he took upon

upon him our Infirmities, and *was in all points tempted like as we are*, that he might become a merciful High Priest, willing to pity and to pray for us. Whilst he was in the Flesh, he was very conversant in this Duty, spending whole Nights in Prayer, which *he offer'd up with strong Cries and Tears, and was heard in that he feared*, Heb. 5. 7. He that was thus able to pray himself, was best able to teach us to pray; and being our Advocate and Mediator, was as willing as able to teach us, and likewise to procure Acceptance to the Prayer that he taught. In the Verse before the Text, we find him busied in this very Work; for he had just made an end of praying, when one of his Disciples desir'd him to teach them to pray; to whom he then gave this Form, *When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.* Having found the Author, we are,

2. To consider the Matter of this Prayer, which must be the most excellent, the most useful, and the most agreeable to the Divine Will, being indited by Him who is the Wisdom of the Father, and dictated by that Holy Spirit which cannot err. As for ourselves, the Apostle tells us, that *we know not what to pray for as we ought*. We are apt many times to desire things that are more hurtful than beneficial for us, things that tend more to feed our Vanity and inflame our Lusts, than to save our Souls; and the Mercy is oft-times greater in denying than granting them to us. To prevent this, our Saviour hath here summ'd up the matter of our Prayers for us, and directed us only to ask such things as tend to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of our Souls. Here is nothing mean or trivial, nothing unnecessary or unbecoming is made the matter of our Request; but all things are so wisely order'd and contriv'd in it, as may best fute the Dignity of the Divine Majesty, and the Necessities of those that address to him: So that as *Solomon's Song* is call'd the *Song of Songs*, or the most excellent of all Songs, for the Wisdom of the Composer, and the Weight of the Matter contain'd in it; so this may be styl'd the Prayer of Prayers, for the Wisdom of the Author, and the Worth of the things desir'd in it. This for the Matter of this Prayer. Then,

3. For the Form, 'tis the most absolute, perfect and comprehensive of all Forms; in which, as there is nothing redundant that may be well spar'd, so there is nothing defective that needs to be supply'd: All that is necessary to be done or desir'd, for advancing the Honour of our Maker,

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is briefly compriz'd in the three first Petitions, wherein we are taught to pray for the enlarging the Kingdom, the hallowing the Name, and the fulfilling the Will of our Heavenly Father. All that is needful for the supply of our own Wants, both of Body and Soul, is summ'd up in the three last Petitions; wherein we are directed to pray for our *daily Bread*, for our bodily Sustenance, for *Forgiveness of Sins*, for the Health and Welfare of our Souls, and for *Deliverance from all Evil* of Sin and Punishment, for the eternal Happiness and Salvation of both. In a word, all that is requisite to be requested for the Life that now is, and that which is to come, is summarily contain'd in this complete and comprehensive Form. Then,

4. For the Parts of this Prayer, they are reduc'd to these three:

(1.) The Preface, contain'd in these words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

(2.) The Petitions, in number six, in the following words, *Hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come*, and so forth.

(3.) The Conclusion or Doxology, in these words, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever, Amen.*

In which the three great parts of Prayer, Supplication, Deprecation and Thanksgiving manifestly meet, as will appear hereafter in the Explication of them. Moreover,

5. We may observe in these words a strict charge to use this Form in our Addresses unto God; for our Saviour bids us, when we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. which is a plain Command to go to him with these words. This is the rather to be minded, because some have lately started a new and wild Notion, that our Saviour prescrib'd this Prayer only as a Pattern or Platform to frame other Prayers by, and not as a Form to be us'd in the same words; which has made many omit it both in their publick and private Devotions.

But this is directly contrary, not only to the express Words of the Text, which wills us, whenever we pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. but likewise to the Sense put upon them in all Ages of the Church, which hath ever address'd to God in these words, and never left out this divine Form in any of the publick Offices of Devotion.

Lastly, We may observe from these words, both the Lawfulness and Usefulness of Forms of Prayer in the Worship

ship of God. We find Forms of Blessing and Prayer prescribed by God Almighty in the Old Testament ; in conformity to which, the *Jewish* Doctors gave Forms of Prayer to their Disciples, to be learnt and us'd by them. In the New Testament we find *John* the Baptist, the first Gospel-Preacher, did the same ; and here we find the Disciples desiring our Saviour to teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Disciples ; and he instantly gave them this Divine Form, with a Command to use it in all their solemn Addresses unto God, as the distinguishing Badge and Cognizance of his Disciples. So that they who lay aside this Prayer, do in effect renounce their Discipleship ; and instead of being the true Followers of Christ, prove only so many Deserters of him. In short,

The Precept and Practice of our blessed Saviour, who both prescribed and us'd Forms of Prayer ; the Example of the Primitive Christians, and all that succeeded them, who have done the same ever since, may abundantly confirm us in the Lawfulness and Use of this, and other Forms of Prayer compos'd by it : yea, the many Indecencies that are found in the Devotions of those that practise otherwise, may plainly convince us not only of the Expediency but Necessity of godly Forms, to preserve the Harmony and Reverence of Divine Worship.

And now having premis'd these things, I come to the Lord's Prayer itself ; where I must begin,

1. With the Preface to it, contain'd in these words, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* In which words we are directed to address unto God : (1.) With the endearing Title of *Father*. (2.) With the common Title of *Our Father*. (3.) With the high and noble Title of *Heavenly Father*, or *Father which is in Heaven*. All which tending to the Efficacy and Solemnity of our Devotion, must be briefly consider'd. And,

(1.) We are here directed to begin our Prayers with the endearing Compellation of *Father*, which we know is the first and chiefest of all Relations ; saying, *Our Father*.

To this the Son of God directs us, partly to assure us of God's fatherly Care and Affection towards us, and partly to mind us of our filial Love and Duty towards him : and with what fitter Title could we begin our Devotions than that of *Father*, which includes both ? For,

1. The Love of a Parent towards a Child is very dear and tender : Can a Father forget his Son, or a Mother forsake the

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the Offspring of her own Bowels? no more can God leave or forsake his own Children. Why, he made and gave us our Being, and so is our Father by Creation; and when we, like prodigal and rebellious Sons, had forfeited his Favour, and lost our Sonship, he restor'd it again to us, engrafting us a-new into his Family, and, by a fresh Title of Adoption, enabling us to cry, *Abba, Father*. He hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, and so is our Father by Regeneration; he gives us Food and Rayment, he preserves, instructs, corrects, and does all other good Offices of a Father for us here; and above all, expresses his fatherly Care by providing an eternal Inheritance for us hereafter. And as this Appellation assures us of this his fatherly Love and Care towards us; so does it mind us also of our filial Love and Duty towards him, engaging us to draw nigh to him in Faith and Hope, to put our Trust in him, to be thankful for all his Mercies, to submit to his Corrections, and to serve him truly all the days of our Life. All this is included in the Title of Father, with which we are here taught to usher in our Requests; from whence we may learn to come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, knowing that we cannot miss of the Bowels of a Father, if we bring with us the Affections of Children.

2. We are here directed to begin our Prayers, not only with the endearing Appellation of Father, but with the common Title of *Our Father*: By which our Saviour hath taught us not to confine our Prayers to ourselves only, but to take in all Mankind within the Compass of our Devotion and Charity. He doth not will us to say, *My Father*, or to call upon him singly for ourselves, but to address to him in a common style, and to say, *Our Father*; to link us together in our Devotion, and make us Partakers of each others Prayers. The term of *Father* minds us of our Relation to God, the term of *Our Father* minds us of our Relation to one another: the former serves to encrease our Faith, the latter our Charity: and both mind us that we are Brethren, partaking of the same Nature, and belonging to the same Family, and therefore are concern'd to desire the good of others equally with our own.

By this our Saviour hath taught us to account and call upon God, as the common Father of Mankind, who is much more ready than any earthly Parent to hear the Cries, and to give good things to his Children. And this makes it indeed a common Prayer, in the behalf of ourselves and all Men; yea, by willing us to address to God in this general

Compellation, he hath united us all into one Soul, and taught us with one Heart and one Voice to breathe out our Requests together: by which he hath directed us to lay aside all Malice and Envy, to love as Brethren, and to come together as so many Children of the same Father; and then we shall say with the Psalmist, *Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* In short,

There is no Father but is delighted with the Concord and Unity of his Children, nor can any turn the deaf Ear to their united Petitions; but this is no where more acceptable and successful than in our Addresses unto God, whose holy Spirit is no less griev'd at our Divisions, than 'tis delighted with Unanimity: which should teach us to labour for those pious and charitable Dispositions, that may incline us to unite in our Petitions, and with one Mind and one Mouth to say, *Our Father.*

3. To the common Relation and Compellation of *Our Father*, we are directed to add the Title of *Heavenly Father*, or *Our Father which art in Heaven*; partly to distinguish him from all earthly Parents, and partly to raise our Minds above these terrene Objects here below, and fasten them on the celestial Mansions above. Our Fathers upon Earth are impotent and weak, like ourselves; and tho they may wish well to their Children, yet are many times unable to help them: but our Father in Heaven is always willing, and always able to help those that call upon him. This is signify'd to us by the Royal Seat of his Residence, which is in Heaven, the Center of all Happiness and Power, where he *reigns as a King for ever*, and has his Imperial Throne in the Regions of Light and Glory: whereby is represented to us the superlative Greatness and Majesty of him whom we address to in our Prayers; which is not any frail earthly Creature, like ourselves, but the omnipotent Creator of all things, whose Throne is in Heaven, and can do whatever pleases him. He is indeed every where, and filleth the Earth as well as Heaven with his Presence; but his Royal Seat, or more especial Residence, is in Heaven, the Mansion of never-failing Light and Glory, from whence he beholdeth and blesses the Children of Men.

By this our blessed Saviour would,

1. Possess our Minds with awful Apprehensions of God, and create Reverence and Humility in our Approaches to him, considering the infinite distance and disproportion between him and us; he being the great God that hath his Throne

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Throne in the Heavens, and we but vile Worms, crawling upon the face of the Earth. Now this Reverence is order'd to be express'd by the Paucity of our Words, and the Lowliness of our Gestures in our Addresses to him. For the former, *Solomon* wills us to consider, *that God is in Heaven, and we upon Earth, therefore our Words should be few*: Suitable whereunto a greater than *Solomon* hath condemn'd the much Speaking of the Heathens, and the long Prayers of the Pharisees. For the latter, *David* calls upon us to *worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*: which requires us to pray to him with the greatest lowliness both of Body and Mind; and to encourage us hereunto, our blessed Saviour hath given us his Precept and Example for both.

2. Our praying to a Father in Heaven was design'd to confirm our Faith and Hope in him, and to beget the greater assurance of an Answer to our Petitions, for Power and Goodness are inseparably annex'd to his Royal Throne: Being seated in the highest Heavens, he hath all other things under his feet, the very Angels themselves continually attending his Throne, and being ever ready to do his Will. And what can we want on Earth, that have a Father in Heaven that can do all things?

3. The consideration that God is in Heaven, serves to elevate our Minds above these earthly things, and to fix them upon the things above. *Sursum Corda*, lift up your Hearts, was often sounded in the Ears of the People in the times of the Primitive Devotion; to which the Answer was, *Habemus ad Dominum*, we lift them up unto the Lord. Low and mean Thoughts and Desires become not those that pray to the most High; his being in Heaven should heighten our Minds, and raise them above the perishing Vanities of this World.

In a word, the Relation of *Father* may give us Boldness and Confidence in our addressing to him.

His being *Our Father* may teach us Charity and Concord in all our Requests: His being *Our Father in Heaven* may teach us Reverence and godly Fear in all our Approaches to the Throne of Grace. So much for the Preface to this excellent Prayer, in which we see every Word hath its weight, and admirably prepares us to put up the following Petitions.





DISCOURSE V.

LUKE xi. 2.

Hallowed be thy Name.

HAVING done with the Preface, I come to the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, which are in number Six; three whereof relate unto God, as *Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; and three unto ourselves, as *Give us this Day our Daily Bread, Forgive us our Sins, and Lead us into Temptation*. The former tend to the advancing of God's Glory, and the latter to the promoting our own Salvation.

But before I begin to speak particularly of them, it will not be amiss to observe two things; the one relating to the Order, the other to the Number of these Petitions.

1st, That which concerns the Order, is that our Saviour here directs us in the first place to mind the Honour of our Maker, and to prefer his Glory before our own Salvation; for the Petitions that refer to the former, go before those that concern the latter. Indeed the Glory of God was the first and great End of our Creation; he made and design'd all things subservient thereunto, and stamp'd apparent Marks of his infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness upon them for that purpose: But Man especially was endow'd with nobler Faculties to that end, having an Understanding to know, and a Tongue to set forth his Praise. This is to be the end of all our natural Actions; *Whether ye eat or drink* (saith St. Paul) *do all to the Praise and Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. but must be chiefly so of all our religious Actions, which the same Apostle styles *the Fruits of Righteousness, to the Glory and Praise of God*, Phil. 1. 11. And St. Peter declares, the end of all our good Works is *that God in all things may be glorify'd*, 1 Pet. 4. 11. 'Twas the Pharisees fault to make their Prayers for selfish and secular Ends, to be seen of Men, and to court more the Praise of Men than the Honour of God: whereas our Saviour, in this Prayer, hath taught us another Lesson, where, by placing the Petitions that concern our Maker before those that relate to ourselves, he hath

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shew'd that our first and principal Regard ought to be to him, and that we are to prefer his Glory before our own Good: which is therefore to be observ'd not only in all our Prayers, but in the whole Course of our Lives. This for the Order. Then,

2dly, For the Number: We are allow'd to put up as many Petitions for ourselves, as are requir'd for our Maker; for our Saviour hath here prescrib'd three for each. And tho' Duty and Decency require our first and principal Regard for the Glory of God, yet in subordination to that, we may and ought to consult our own Good: yea, God Almighty hath so closely twisted his own Glory and our Good together, that we cannot mind the one without the other; there is such an inseparable Connexion between them, that our Happiness consists in honouring of him: for we cannot better serve ourselves than by serving him, and we never advance his Glory but we promote our own. So that we cannot complain of God as a hard Master, who hath thus made our Duty to become our Interest, and for one Petition put up for him, hath allow'd us to put up another for ourselves. Sure his Commandments cannot be grievous, that are allay'd with so much Sweetness, and carry their Reward with them; nor can his Ways be unequal, who hath equally minded our Happiness with his own Glory.

That which we are to observe from hence, is the exceeding great Honour and Favour which God vouchsafes to his worthless Creatures, in bearing so tender a Regard towards them, in a manner loving them as himself, and equally consulting their Honour and Happiness with his own Glory; which should make us say with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is Man, that thou art thus mindful of him; or the Son of Man, that thou so regardest him?*

And now having premis'd these things, I begin with the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer, contain'd in these words, *Hallowed be thy Name.* What is meant by the *Name of God*, and what by *Hallowing* or Sanctifying his *Name*, has been already open'd in our Exposition of the Third Commandment; to which, to avoid Repetitions, I refer the Reader.

Briefly, By the *Name of God*, we are to understand all that by which he makes himself known to us, and distinguisheth himself from all others, as his Titles, his Attributes, his Word, and his Works; and likewise all things related to him, or denominated by him, as his Ministers,

his Sanctuary, his Sabbath, his Possessions, or that consecrated Part of our Substance, which he hath reserv'd and devoted to the Altar: all which being intitled to him, and styl'd more peculiarly his, are here comprehended under the *Name of God*.

By *Hallowing* or Sanctifying of this Name, we are to understand the having an honourable Esteem of it, the exalting of it in our Mind, and separating it from common and profane to Divine and Sacred Uses.

But for the fuller understanding of this Petition, we may note, that to sanctify in Scripture hath a double Sense, either to make holy, or to use and do unto a thing according to, or as it becometh its Holiness. In the former of these senses God is not to be hallow'd or sanctify'd by us; for he being infinitely holy of himself, we can neither add to his Holiness, nor take from it: and therefore 'tis in the latter sense that we are to understand these words, when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name*; that is, that we think and speak of it in a holy manner, and use it in such a way as becometh the Holiness of it. And how that may be best done, 'twill be requisite here briefly to declare.

To which end we are to observe a twofold Holiness: The one original, absolute, and independent, which appertains to God only; the other a deriv'd, relative Holiness, which appertains to those things that are more peculiarly his, and belong to him.

Now according to these two sorts of Holiness, there are two different ways of Sanctification; the one appertaining to God himself, the other to all things related to him, and call'd by his Name. For the

First, There is a peculiar incommunicable Honour and Holiness to be attributed to God, upon the account of his supereminent Excellency and Perfections, which is not to be given to any created Being; and this is that religious or divine Worship which is in Scripture appropriated to him, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. This is that *Glory to God in the Highest*, which was sung by the Angels at our Saviour's Birth, and which they are still singing in Heaven, *To him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore*. This is the Honour due to his infinite and adorable Perfections, in ascribing whereof we are to join with the heavenly Host in that Seraphick Hymn, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, and Glory, and Power, for thou hast created all things*.

things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created. So that this is the *Hallowing the Name of God*, which is the Work of Saints and Angels in Heaven, who cease not day or night, saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts*; and which we are likewise to begin here on Earth, not only rendering to him all Praise and Thanksgiving ourselves, but wishing and praying that all others may hallow and adore his holy Name, that all Minds may entertain worthy Thoughts of him, and that all Tongues may celebrate and speak of his Praise. Moreover, because the Name of God may be honour'd or dishonour'd by our Actions as well as Words, we are directed to do all those things whereby God may be glorify'd, and avoid all those whereby his Name may be dishonour'd or blasphem'd.

This is the first and great thing we pray for, when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name*; to wit, that God may be glorify'd, and that all things in Heaven and Earth may promote his Honour, and sound forth his Praise.

But beside this, there are some other things, which by reason of their relation unto God, have his Name stamp'd upon them, and therefore are styl'd Sacred, and are to be us'd and accounted as holy unto the Lord; not by any original essential Holiness, which is peculiar to God only, but by a deriv'd relative Holiness, which is communicated to all those things that bear his Name, and belong to him. As,

(1.) There are some Persons who are set apart to minister about holy things, and are therefore styl'd God's Ministers, being call'd by his Name, and commission'd by his Authority to teach, to bless, and to pray for the People: and as these are to demean themselves as holy Persons appointed to attend the Service of God, so are they to be honour'd as God's Ambassadors, and treated as the Ministers of Jesus Christ; the Relation they have to God, and their Dedication to his Service, ought to secure them from Contempt, and procure them the Love and Veneration of Mankind.

(2.) There are some Times set apart for the Worship and Service of God, and are therefore call'd by his Name; such is the Sabbath or Lord's Day, which being dedicated to him, and challeng'd as his, is to be hallow'd and kept holy to the Lord, by setting it apart from the daily and ordinary Business of our Calling, and devoting it to the holy Offices of Religion: for we are commanded, to *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it Holy*, God claiming it as his, and by

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his own resting on that Day hath blest'd and hallow'd it to his own Service.

(3.) There are some Places set apart and dedicated to the Worship of God, which are call'd by his Name, and are likewise to be kept holy unto him: This is evident not only from the Care and Cost bestow'd on the Temple by God's own Appointment, under the Old Testament, but likewise from our Saviour's Indignation and Severity against the Profaners of it, under the New; for he *whip'd the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*, and sharply rebuk'd those that made *the House of Prayer a Den of Thieves*. In like manner we find the Apostle checking some among the *Corinthians* for polluting those holy Places; saying, *What, have ye not Houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of God?* 1 Cor. 11. 22.

(4.) There is a certain Portion of our Possessions set apart by God, the Giver of all, for the Maintenance of his Service: This being reserv'd by him as his, and call'd by his Name, is likewise to be hallow'd or kept holy; and that is, by applying it to those Uses which God has appointed, without alienating or detaining any part of it; for to withhold this consecrated Part of our Substance, or to turn it to any other Use, is to rob God, and to bring a Curse upon all that we possess.

Lastly, Because the Name of God may be hallow'd or profan'd by our Lives and Actions, as well as Words; we are requir'd by our Good Works to glorify God, and to take care that by our evil Deeds his Name be not blasphem'd.

Thus we see the Sense of this Petition, and what we pray for when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name*; namely, that God in all things may be glorify'd, that we never mention any of his Titles without the Honour and Respect due to them; that we demean ourselves suitably to all his Attributes, loving him for his Goodness, admiring his Wisdom, trusting his Power, believing his Promises, fearing his Threats, and at all times celebrating the Praises due to his Name.

Moreover, We pray that all this may be done, not by ourselves alone, but by all others, that they may all entertain honourable and worthy Thoughts of God, and make his Glory the great End and Scope of all their Actions; that they may all adore his Perfections, celebrate his Praises, and have a due regard to all that bears his Name, or be-

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longs to him. In a word, we are here taught to honour God with our Heart, by bearing a sincere Love to him and his ways; with our Mouths, by frequent Acknowledgments of him, and speaking well of all he doth; with our Lives, by living as becometh his Children and Servants, that *our Light may so shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

This is to hallow the Name of God; which being made the first Petition in our Prayers, shews that we are in the first place to mind the Honour of our Maker, and to direct all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions to the Advancement of his Glory: and as our Saviour hath made this the principal Subject of our Prayers, so ought we to make it the main Scope of all our Endeavours, lest our Practices give the lye to our Prayers, and we by wicked Lives blemish and blaspheme that holy Name which we desire should be hallowed.

DISCOURSE VI.

LUKE xi. 2.

Thy Kingdom come.

HAVING explain'd the first Petition in the Lord's Prayer, and shew'd what we are to understand by *Hallowing the Name of God*; to wit, the Advancement of his Honour and Glory: I proceed now to the

Second, which contains the Way and Means conducing thereunto, and that is, by the Propagation of his Kingdom; for which we pray in the next words, *Thy Kingdom come.*

This Petition seems more especially to respect that Time and State of things at which it was deliver'd, when that Kingdom, which St. *John* a little before declar'd to *be at hand*, and which Christ himself told some standing about him *that they should shortly see*, began to appear; at which time it was very proper to pray for the coming and propagating of that Kingdom, which was promis'd and long expected, and then seem'd to have its Beginning. But tho
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this Petition seems chiefly calculated for that time, when this Kingdom began, yet is it still seasonable and requisite to be put up for the Growth and Increase of it, that it may be not only confirm'd and continu'd, but may likewise prosper and flourish in the World; and therefore in treating of it, I must enquire,

First, What is here meant by the Kingdom of God.

Secondly, What by the Coming of this Kingdom. And,

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*. For the

First, We must distinguish of a twofold Kingdom. The one general, which God exercises over the whole World. The other particular, by which he governs his Church and People.

1st, His general Kingdom extends itself over all things in Heaven and Earth: for as God made the World, and all the Creatures in it, so is he the supreme Monarch and Sovereign of it, all inferior Princes being his Viceroy and Deputies, to rule for and under him; for which reason he is often styl'd, *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*. Of this is that of the Psalmist, *The Lord hath prepar'd his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all*. To this Kingdom not only all the Powers on Earth, but all the Devils in Hell are subject; they are all reserv'd in Chains of Darkness, and can go no farther than they will let them: to this likewise all wicked Men are and must be subject; God Almighty restraining and punishing them as he sees cause, saying with him in the Parable, *But those mine Enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me*, Luke 19. 27. But beside this universal Kingdom that ruleth over all, there is,

2dly, A more particular Kingdom, which God exercises over his Church and People, *ruling in their Hearts by Faith, and guiding them by his Holy Spirit*. This is in Scripture call'd the Kingdom of the *Messias*, or the Mediatorial Kingdom which God exerciseth by the Mediator, to whom *he hath given all Power both in Heaven and Earth*; and is therefore sometimes styl'd *the Kingdom of Christ*, sometimes *the Kingdom of Heaven*, and sometimes *the Kingdom of God*. And this particular Kingdom is likewise double, *viz.* The Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory; the one respects this Life, the other the next.

(1.) The

(1.) The Kingdom of Grace consists partly of all those that give up their Names to Christ by Baptism, that embrace the Gospel, and by an outward Profession own themselves for his Servants and Subjects, tho they do not always answer it by a suitable Conversation; and partly likewise of those that pay him a true and real Subjection, yielding up their Hearts to him, and leading their Lives in due Obedience to his Laws. This is *the Kingdom of God within us*, of which we read *Luke 17. 21.* and this consists not (as the Apostle tells us) in *Meat and Drink*, or any external Observances, but in *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. The former of these are the visible Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, being known by an outward Profession; the latter the invisible Subjects, being known to God only. In this Kingdom of Grace the Holy Spirit of God is the Regent, the Ministers of Christ are the Ambassadors, the Gospel is the Law by which 'tis govern'd, the Sacraments are the Seals by which all things are convey'd and confirm'd; the Discipline whereof consists in bruising his Enemies with a Rod of Iron, and ruling his Friends with a Scepter of Righteousness.

(2.) The Kingdom of Glory is the Completion of this Kingdom of Grace hereafter in Heaven, where all his Foes being made his Footstool, himself will be advanc'd upon a Throne of Glory, and bring all his faithful Subjects to a *Kingdom prepar'd for them before the Foundation of the World*; of which we read, *Mat. 25.*

This then is the Kingdom, which is chiefly meant of this peculiar Kingdom, exercis'd over the Church and People of God, together with the two great Branches of it, the Kingdom of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter. But,

Secondly, What are we to understand by the *Coming of this Kingdom*?

In answer to which, two things are manifestly intended by it.

1. The setting up of this Kingdom where it is not. And,
2. The preserving and increasing of it where it already is.

1. I say, this Expression imports the setting up of this Kingdom where it is not. When Christ prescrib'd this Petition, his Kingdom was very imperfectly known to the Jews, and not at all known or embrac'd by the Gentiles, but rather oppos'd and resisted by both.

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As for the Jews, tho this Kingdom of Christ commenc'd immediately after the Fall, in that Promise, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*; and tho it were after more plainly declar'd to *Abraham*, in the Promise that *in his Seed should all the Nations of the earth be blessed*: yet their Knowledge, both of Christ and his Kingdom, was so obscure and imperfect, that few of them believ'd or submitted to it; for when Christ came, the main Body of that great People rejected him, saying, *We will not have this Man to reign over us*, Luke 19.

As for the Gentiles, they were profess'd Enemies to this Kingdom, being *Aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel*, and *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without Christ, and without God in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. They had no other God but *the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that ruleth in the Children of Disobedience*. Now the end of Christ's coming being to destroy this Kingdom of Satan, and to erect his own Throne in Mens Hearts, *to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*? we are here taught to wish and pray for the Accomplishment hereof; that all the Kingdoms of the World may become the *Kingdoms of Christ*, and that *all Nations may see the Salvation of God*. 'Twas prophesy'd of old concerning the Jews, that they should *look up to him whom they had pierc'd*; and of the Gentiles, that they should come in and submit to his righteous Scepter, he having *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession*. Now the fulfilling of these Prophecies is the Coming of this Kingdom, which signifies the Enlargement and Propagation of it, by the Accession of Jew and Gentile the two great Enemies of it; by whose Submission he becomes a *Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People Israel*.

2. The Coming of Christ's Kingdom signifies not only the setting it up where it is not, but the Continuance and Increase of it where it is. Upon our Saviour's Coming, the Light of the Gospel began to dawn upon the benighted World, which after *shin'd out more and more to the perfect Day*. Many of the Jews embrac'd his Doctrine, and the Gentiles also submitted to the Scepter of his Kingdom, at which time there were daily added to the Church such as *should be saved*. Now this Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, directs us to pray for the farther Progress and Propagation of it, that the Light of his Gospel may shine in all the

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dark Corners of the World, that his Kingdom may be set up and spread over the face of the whole Earth, and that Christianity may not only obtain every where, but that it may be entertain'd with a due Faith and sincere Obedience, that Christ's Kingdom may prevail over all the Powers of Darkness, and that he may *reign till he hath put all Enemies under his feet*. Thus we see what the Kingdom of Christ is, and likewise what is meant by the coming of it; from whence we learn, in the

Third place, What it is we pray for, when we put up this Petition, which is for the Propagation and Prosperity of Christ's Kingdom. And tho this Petition was fram'd by our Saviour, as most befitting the Time and State of Affairs when he prescrib'd it, which was at the beginning of the Gospel; yet it still lies upon us as a Duty to put up the same Petition, and will be so till the end of the World; and that with respect both to the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory. For there are many Parts of the World, where this Kingdom of Grace, or the Gospel of Christ is not yet come, and many things are to be pray'd for in Respect of them. Again, even in those places where this Kingdom of Grace is in some measure come, there are many things to be ask'd for the more effectual and successful Exercise of it. And then for the Kingdom of Glory, that not commencing till this World be ended, there are many things we are to beg of God, in order to our Preparation for and Reception into it.

As for those Places and Nations, where the Kingdom of Christ is not yet set up, of which sort there are but too many, as the large Countries under the *Turk* and other Heathen Emperors: for these we are to pray:

1st, That the Kingdom of Grace may come among them: and to that end, that the Gospel of Christ may be made known and preach'd unto them, that being the ordinary way and means of propagating and establishing of Christ's Kingdom; for *Faith comes by Hearing* (saith the Apostle) *and Hearing by the Word of God*: And the same Apostle styles the Gospel, *The Power of God unto Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. And therefore we are to pray that those Inhabitants of the World, that *sit in Darkness, and the Regions of the Shadow of Death*, may have the Light of Divine Truths arise and shine into their Hearts, that the Gospel may be publish'd to them, and have a free Passage into all the Cor-

ners of the Earth; that they who at present are Slaves to the Devil, and do his Work, may be converted and baptiz'd, renouncing their old Master, and becoming Subjects of Christ's Kingdom. But because there is *no Hearing without a Preacher, nor any Preaching except they be sent*, Rom. 10. 14, 15. we are therefore,

2dly, To pray the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Vineyard. 'Tis by the Ministry of the Word, that the Gospel is to sound to all the Earth, and the Word to the ends of the World: therefore we are to beg for able and faithful Pastors to be sent abroad to feed the People with Knowledge and Understanding, that the Word of God may run and be glorify'd, and the People every where may be led into the ways of Truth and Peace by the Hands of Moses and Aaron. But because without God's Blessing all these things will prove ineffectual (for tho Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, yet 'tis God only that gives the Increase) we are therefore,

3dly, To pray that God would bless the Endeavours of all that are sent upon this Errand, that his Work may prosper in their Hands, and his Word in their Mouths may prevail to the pulling down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan, and the building up many in their most holy Faith; that all Men may flock into the Kingdom of Christ, and the Earth be fill'd with the Knowledge of God, as the Waters cover the Sea.

These things are necessary to be pray'd for, that the Kingdom of Grace may come, where 'tis not yet known or profess'd; which being agreeable to the Will of God, and here directed to by our Blessed Saviour, must be acceptable to him: and if duly ask'd and endeavour'd for, will not fail of a Blessing. Moreover,

2. For those Places where the Kingdom of Christ is already come, and his Sovereignty own'd by an outward Profession, we pray for a real Subjection to the Laws of it; that all who embrace the Gospel of Christ, may walk worthy of it, and adorn their Profession by a suitable Conversation: for without this 'tis all but Mockery, and saying with the Jews, *Hail King!* and crucifying him.

Furthermore when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*, we pray for the Continuance and Preservation of it, that it may not be destroy'd by Persecution, nor corrupted by Heresy, nor undermin'd by Schism, Hypocrisy, or Profaneness; but that the pure Word of God may be protected by pious Princes,

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preach'd by learned and faithful Pastors, and practis'd by a willing and obedient People, who may receive the Truth not only in the Light, but the Love of it, and lead their Lives in all due Obedience and Observance to it. In a word, we pray that Christ may reign in the Hearts of all his Subjects; that God would convert or confound all his Enemies, and bring down every high thing that exalts itself against the Kingdom of Christ.

All this is imply'd in this devout Petition, which we daily put up for the Coming of Christ's Kingdom of Grace here. Then,

Lastly, for his Kingdom of Glory hereafter, we pray that that may come too in its due time; that the Number of the Elect being accomplish'd, he would hasten his second Coming, and receive his faithful Servants to that Glory which he had with his Father before the Foundation of the World. We read in Scripture of this visible and glorious Manifestation of Christ's Kingdom, who will come in the Clouds of Heaven attended with his holy Angels to judge the World; at which time he will dispense his Mercy and Pardon to all his faithful Subjects, making them Sharers of his Joy, and Partakers of his everlasting Kingdom; and likewise glorify his Justice in the final Doom and Destruction of all his Enemies, who refusing to submit to his Laws, shall receive the just reward of their Rebellion and Disobedience.

Now tho good Men, for the sake of the Wicked, may desire the respiting of that time, that by Repentance they may escape the Horror and Punishment of it: yet for their own sakes they have reason to long and pray for that happy Day, when they are to enter into their Master's Joy, and be publickly receiv'd into his Kingdom of Glory: which is sufficient to make them join with the Souls under the Altar, and say, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Thus we see what we pray for in this Petition: by which we learn the Wisdom and Piety of our Church in teaching us to pray for all *Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks, that God would take from them all Ignorance, Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of his Word, and so fetch them home to his own Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd.*

Wherefore to conclude, Let us be ever mindful what we ask of God, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*: namely, that

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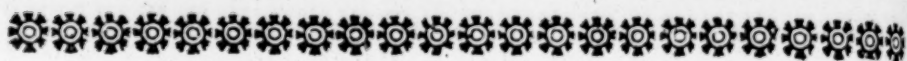
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Wherefore to conclude, Let us be ever mindful what we ask of God, when we say, *Thy Kingdom come*: namely, that

that his Kingdom may be advanc'd and enlarg'd in the World, that it may come within us by a hearty Subjection to his Will, and without us by a general Submission and Conversion of all his Enemies; and to these our Prayers let us add our best Endeavours, so shall we from true Members of Christ's Kingdom of Grace, be in due time translated to his Kingdom of Glory; which God grant, &c.



DISCOURSE VII.

LUKE xi. 2. latter part.

Thy Will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth.

I HAVE spoken to the two first Petitions in the Lord's Prayer, which relate to the Glory of God, the prime End of all things, viz. the *Hallowing of his Name*, and the *Coming of his Kingdom*. I proceed now to the third, which concerns a due Obedience to his Will; contain'd in these words, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*. In which we may observe,

1. The Petition itself, *Thy will be done in Earth*. And,
2. The Manner or Measure of doing it; *As it is in Heaven*.

In treating of both which, I must enquire,

First, What is that *Will of God*, which we desire may be done on Earth.

Secondly, How this Will of God is done in Heaven. And,

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we desire that the *Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*. For the

First, The Will of God is distinguish'd into his secret and reveal'd Will; according to that of *Moses*, *Secret things belong to God, but things reveal'd to us and our Children, that we may do all things reveal'd in his Law*; Deut. 29. 29.

1. The Secret Will of God is his eternal Purpose or Decree about the Event of things, whereby he orders all according

According to the secret Counsel of his own Will. Of this kind is the Knowledge of the Times and Seasons, which God has reserv'd to himself; as the Day of Judgment, the Number of our Days, the Fall of Antichrist, the Conversion of the Jews, the Salvation of the Heathens, and the like: All which being kept secret from us, 'twill be too much Curiosity and Presumption to pry into or determine any thing about them. By this Will of his *he doth whatever pleaseth him in Heaven and Earth, and in all deep places*; much of which, as we are not worthy to know, so neither will it become us too nicely to enquire. This Will of his must and will be done, whether we pray for it or against it; and therefore our Duty is to acquiesce in all Resolutions of it, and to say always, *God's Will be done*.

2. His reveal'd Will, which alone belongs to us, is that wise Discovery of his Mind and Will, made to us in the Holy Scriptures; wherein he has declar'd all that we are concern'd to know or practise. And this again is divided into his Will of Precept, and his Will of Providence: by the one, we are directed what we are to do; by the other, what and how we are to suffer.

The Will of his Precept relates to our Lives and Actions, directing us how we are to walk, so as to please God: *He hath shew'd thee, O Man (saith Micah) what is good, and what the Lord thy God requires of thee, &c. Mic. 6. 8. This is the Will of God (saith the Apostle) even your Sanctification, &c. 1 Thess. 4. 5.* And elsewhere, *God hath call'd us to Holiness, and to walk unblameably before him in Love.* This Will of God the Apostle would have us not only to know, but practise; first searching *what is the good, perfect, and acceptable Will of God*, and then making it the Rule of our Lives and Actions; that *we may be perfectly instructed in every good Work, to do his Will*, Heb. 13. 21.

The Will of his Providence respects all Events of things, whether prosperous or adverse; in which we are to submit to the Will of God, and rest satisfy'd in all the Divine Dispensations, acknowledging the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God in all that befalls both ourselves and others. This is briefly *the Will of God*. But,

How is it said to *be done in Earth*? Why, two ways; either actively, by obeying what God commands, or passively, by bearing what he is pleas'd to inflict. In the

First Sense, the Will of God is said to be done by us when we yield a ready Compliance to his Precepts, and order our ways by the Direction of his Laws; when we make his Will the Standard and Measure of our Actions, and say with the Psalmist in the Person of our Saviour, *Lo! I come to do thy Will, O God; yea, thy Law is within my Heart.*

In the latter Sense, his Will is done by us, when we patiently bear what he thinks fit to lay upon us, resigning up our Wills to his, and saying with our Saviour, in taking off the bitter Cup, *Not my Will, but thine be done.* To both these we stand oblig'd by the Principles of Reason and Gratitude, which require us to obey our Maker, who has the sole Power to order and command us; especially when, like a gracious and tender-hearted Father, he only consults our Good, and does far better things for us than we can do for ourselves: which should teach us in all cases to say with good old *Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* and with *David, I was dumb, and open'd not my mouth, for it is thy doing.* But for the fuller understanding of this Petition, we must enquire,

Secondly, How the Will of God is done in Heaven? for that being made the Measure and Pattern of our doing it here on Earth, it will be requisite for us to know our Platform, that we may the better conform to and act by it. And here we must note, that the Will of God is done by the Angels and glorify'd Spirits in Heaven, in the most perfect and acceptable manner, and indeed in a way not attainable by us in this imperfect State. However, our Saviour here directing us to pray for it, has will'd us to propound to ourselves the Example of their Obedience, and to use our best Endeavours to imitate and come as near it as we may: To which end, we must know,

1. That the Will of God is done in Heaven *readily* without delay. The holy Angels are still about his Throne, waiting his Commands, and are ever ready to do his Pleasure: no sooner do they know their Master's Will, but they presently set about it, and without any dispute or delay most willingly perform it. Hence we find them always painted with Wings, to shew the nimbleness and readiness of their Motion, that they are not slow and tardy in their Maker's work, but are ever upon the wing, and fly in the execution of his Commands. These Angels of

his are sometimes styl'd, *The Eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro the Earth*, Zech. 4. 10. sometimes *ministring Spirits, that minister to the Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. all which lets us know the Forwardness and Readiness of their Obedience.

2. The Will of God is done in Heaven *cheerfully*, without grudging: All things there are done with alacrity and delight, there is no murmuring or complaining, no uneasiness under their task; but their very Work is Wages, and their Duty is both their Desire and their Happiness. Hence the Angels in Heaven are represented to be still singing and praising God, and delighting to do his Will: their whole Employment is Hallelujahs and Songs of Praise; and all the Blessed do above, is still to sing, and still to love: and sure that must be perform'd with great alacrity and cheerfulness, that is done with Hearts full of Joy, and Mouths full of Melody.

3. The Will of God is done in Heaven *sincerely*, without Hypocrisy: There is no dissembling or double-dealing in those pure and spotless Regions, no flattery or falshood among those glorify'd Spirits, they are not doing one thing and designing another, nor look different ways; but as the Cherubims in the Temple look'd all toward the Mercy-Seat, so do those Cherubims above look always to the Throne of God, to receive his Commands, and fulfil his Will.

4. The Will of God is done in Heaven *thorowly*, without partiality: There is no picking and chusing among those blest Inhabitants, they do not take care to execute one Command, and leave another undone; but they are still accomplishing the whole Will of God, and leave not the least hint or intimation of his Word unfulfill'd: for the Will of God being the reason and measure of their Obedience, it must extend to all his Commands, which have the same stamps of a divine Authority upon them, and that must render their Obedience both uniform and universal.

5. The Will of God is done in Heaven *unanimously* without Discord or Division: There is a perfect Harmony, Consent, and Unity among the blessed-Spirits above, who all join in one Concert, and by united Hearts and Voices complete the Musick of the Celestial Choir. There is no Jarring or Discord to be heard there, no Sects of Factions, no contrary Interests and Designs, no secret Grudges or

open Contentions; but all conspire together in perfect Peace and Concord, every one moving in his own place without thwarting and disturbance, and all uniting together with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify their great Creator. This is the Will of God, and thus is it done in Heaven.

Lastly, The Will of God is done in Heaven *constantly*, without Weariness or Defection: for they *cease not day or night saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, which was, which is, and which is to come.* They are constantly *singing Praises to him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.* There is no Weariness or Fainting among those glorify'd Spirits; their Hallelujahs are incessant, and their Praises know no end or decay.

This is the Pattern here set for our Imitation, which though we cannot at present come up exactly to, nor keep pace in our Obedience with those swift-wing'd Messengers of Heaven, yet we are directed to follow, and come as near them as we can. And this will lead me to the

Third Thing propounded, viz. What we pray for when we say, Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

In general, we pray for a Complacence and Satisfaction of Mind in all God's Proceedings, submitting to his Pleasure, obeying his Precepts, and humbly acquiescing in all the Dispensations of his Providence: not opposing our Will to his, but disclaiming our own Judgments, and renouncing our Desires, when they appear inconsistent with his, and in all things resigning ourselves to his Wisdom, with *not my Will, but thine be done.* More particularly we pray,

1. That we may do the Will of God as readily as the Angels do in Heaven, who dispute not the Equity of his Commands, nor complain of the Difficulty of his Work, but presently set about it, and run with chearfulness in the ways of his Commandments; so ought we to be ever ready to every good Word and Work, doing his Will without delay or procrastination, saying with *David, I made haste, and delay'd not to keep thy Commandments.* And likewise relishing a Sweetness and Delight in doing the Will of God, saying with the devout Psalmist, *O how I love thy Law, all the day long is my study in it: and elsewhere, I delight to do thy Will, O God.*

2. We pray that we may do the Will of God heartily and sincerely, as the Angels do in Heaven, who do their Master's Will not only with Alacrity and Vigour, but with Integrity and Singleness of Heart. Those flaming Seraphims are all Love and Rapture, having the constant Fire of Divine Love burning in their Breasts, which makes them observe the Commands of God with Ardency and Affection. So likewise ought we to obey from the Heart the Commands of our Maker, being *not slothful in Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*; not with Eye or Lip-Service as *Men-pleasers*, but *doing it heartily as unto the Lord*.

3. We pray that we may do the Will of God fully and impartially, as the Angels do in Heaven; for they do not perform their Duty by halves, or make the Doing of one thing compound for the Neglect of another, but pay an uniform and universal Obedience to all his Commands: they are ever ready to execute the whole Will of God, and bear an equal Regard to all his Precepts, as having all the same Authority. This we should not only pray for, but endeavour likewise to put in practice. We find this the frequent Subject of the Psalmist's Prayers, that God would direct him to *love all his Precepts, and to hate every false way*; withal adding, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. 6, 128. And Zachary and Elizabeth are commended for *walking in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*. These are noble Patterns for our Imitation, and yet our Saviour here shews us a more excellent way; willing us to pray, that *the Will of God may be done on Earth*, as fully and thorowly as it is in Heaven.

4. We pray that we may do the Will of God unanimously as the Angels do in Heaven. There is no Dissension or Nonconformity among the Inhabitants of those blessed Regions, but they all join together with one Heart and one Voice to sing the Praises of their Maker; so likewise ought we with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God: this is to begin our Heaven here on Earth, and to do the Will of God here below as it is done above, by joining with them in one Consent and Harmony of Affection and Devotion; which is a matter highly worthy of the united Prayers and Endeavours of all Christians. And therefore we find our Blessed Saviour, who prescrib'd this Petition, upon his leaving the World, praying that all his Followers

upon Earth *might be one*, as he and his Father were one in Heaven; and that there might be the same Unity, Consent, and Harmony among God's Children here below, as is among the glorify'd Saints above.

Lastly, We pray that we may *do the Will of God* constantly, as the Angels do in Heaven; for they never faint or grow weary of their work, but are always attending his Throne, still blessing and praising God, and never cease their triumphant Hallelujahs: suitable whereunto, the Apostle wills us to *pray without ceasing*, being *stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*. Not that we are to be always upon our knees, or continually employ'd in the actual Exercises of Devotion, for that would interfere with other Duties, and is inconsistent with our present State; but that we be still in a Disposition of serving and praising God, and never grow weary of well-doing, knowing that *we shall reap if we faint not*.

This is the Sense of this Petition, which we are therefore diligently to mind and desire in rehearsing of it.



DISCOURSE VIII.

LUKE xi. 3.

Give us day by day our daily Bread.

HAVING finish'd the three first Petitions that relate to the Glory of God, and thereby render'd that Tribute of Honour and Praise due to him; I proceed, as we are here directed, to those that concern our own Welfare: for after we have paid our due respect to God, we are allow'd to ask good things for ourselves; and having sought his Kingdom in the first place, may beg the Supply of all our Wants, beginning, as Nature prompts us, with what is necessary for the Preservation of our Lives or Being, in these words, *Give us this day our daily Bread*.

In explaining of which Petition, I must enquire,

First, What we are to understand here by *Bread*.

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Secondly, What by our daily Bread.

Thirdly, What by limiting of it to this day, or day by day.

Fourthly, What we pray for, when we ask our daily Bread.
For the

First, By Bread here we understand not that Sacramental Bread, or Bread of Life, which was consecrated to represent the Body of Christ, and convey to us the Benefit of those Sufferings he underwent in it; for tho we find the Disciples praying, Lord evermore give us of this Bread, yet this was instituted long after this Petition of the Lord's Prayer was fram'd, and commenc'd not till a little before our Saviour's Death: which it was design'd to represent, and so cannot but by way of Allusion be intended here. Beside,

The Wants of Mankind are partly temporal, and partly spiritual; the one respects the Necessities of the Body, and the other of the Soul: for the Supply of both which, we are here taught to pray, viz. for corporal Food to supply the Wants of the former in this Petition, and spiritual Food for the Needs of the other, imply'd in some of the foregoing and following Petitions. Nor yet,

2. Are we to understand here simply and singly plain natural Bread made of Corn, which is in Scripture styl'd the Staff of Life, and is said to strengthen Man's Heart; for tho this be included as the principal part, yet is it not the whole that is intended by it, for Man liveth not by Bread alone. And therefore,

3. By Bread here we are to understand all manner of Provision, all that Meat and Drink that is necessary to the Sustainance of human Life, and whatever is requir'd to the Support of our frail Nature. And because many things are needful to that end, as Food, Rayment, Habitation, and the like, they are all compriz'd under the Name of Bread. This being the principal thing necessary to the preserving of Life, call'd therefore the Staff of Bread, is by a Figure put to signify all other Necessaries: and as a Famine of Bread is in Scripture set to signify the Want of all Provisions, so by giving of Bread is express'd the Supply of all outward and bodily Wants, or the bestowing of all those temporal and Earthly Blessings that are requisite to the Being, the Comfort, and Welfare of this present Life; such as Health, Safety, Success, Wealth, Friends, and the like, all which we are here impower'd to pray for, as far as we shall need, and as God shall see fit for us. This for the Bread.

Secondly, What is meant here by *our daily Bread*? The Word in the Original is ἀστον ἐμίστιον, which some translate substantial Bread, and would have it understood of that *living Bread that came down from Heaven*, as alone worthy to be crav'd at the hands of God: But this Petition, as was before observ'd, referring chiefly, if not only, to our temporal Wants, must be meant of that corporal Food appointed for the Sustenance of our Bodies, and not of that spiritual Food of our Souls, which is elsewhere pray'd for. Others therefore more fitly understand it of Bread, necessary ἐν τῇ ἐσθῇ, to the Support of our Being, and so make it the same with *Agar's Prayer*, *Prov. 30. 8. Feed me with Food convenient for me.* And indeed it seems more agreeable to the Original, to render it our necessary or convenient, than our daily Bread; for ἐμίστιον hath no reference at all to the Time, but to the Nature and Necessity of our Food: beside, the time of giving and receiving this Bread, is sufficiently express'd in the Petition, by *this day*, or *day by day*; which makes the Addition of *daily* to it somewhat superfluous in so short a Form. And here the great thing to be observ'd, is, That we are directed to pray not for Dainties or Superfluities, but only for necessary and convenient Food. 'Tis ἀστος, Bread, that we are bid to ask, which you know is plain Fare, the most simple, common and homely Diet: And 'tis ἀστος ἐμίστιον, Bread necessary to support our Being, not Plenty or Superfluities to feed our Luxury: τροφήν not τροφήν (as *St. Chrysostom* expresses it) that is, Necessaries not Delicacies; Meat to fill our Bellies, not to feed our Fancies, or please our wanton Appetite. We are not warranted to ask Varieties, or to affect Dainties and Splendor, but to be content to have our Necessities supply'd, and to desire only what is convenient for us: because the Body cannot minister to the Soul in Religious Matters without Food and Rayment, therefore we are allow'd to crave so much as may be needful and subservient to those ends; more may be a Clog and Hindrance to us in our way to Heaven, and therefore we are not bid to ask it: We may indeed and ought soberly and thankfully to enjoy what God sends, but we may not presume to ask or desire more than our Necessities require. This was *Agar's Prayer*, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches*, for there are great Inconveniencies in both these, *but feed me with Food convenient for me.* He desir'd not Riches, lest they should tempt him to Pride, Luxury, and forgetting of God;

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Disc. 8. *Give us this day our daily Bread.* 601

God; and he pray'd against Poverty, lest that should make him reach out *his hands to steal*, and his Tongue to *take God's Name in vain*. To prevent both which he crav'd neither Fulness of Bread, nor Want of it; neither to swim in Plenty nor to pine away with Penury; neither to fare deliciously every day, nor lack convenient Food; in a word, he was content with a Competency, and desir'd no more. *Jacob's Vow* had the same Bounds, *Gen. 28. 20. If the Lord will give me Bread to eat, and Rayment to put on, then the Lord shall be my God.* Where he limits his Desires only to a Competency, craving no more than Food and Rayment to arm him against Hunger and Nakedness, the two great Necessities of Nature: And our Saviour's Direction here reaches no farther than our necessary or daily Bread.

But is this Competency the same to all, or does it admit of degrees? and if so, by what Standard are we to measure this necessary and convenient Food?

In answer to which, a Competency may be measur'd two ways: Either by the Necessities of Nature; in which sense that is a Competency, which is sufficient to support our natural Life or Health: or by the Necessities of our Condition or Station in the World; in which sense that is a Competency, which is necessary to maintain us in that Place or Station wherein God hath set us: that which is sufficient for one of a low Degree, would fall very short to one of a higher and nobler Station.

The Office and Dignity of a Publick Magistrate requires more to support it, than the meaner Circumstances of a private Person; and that which would enrich a Subject, may leave a Prince in a poor helpless Condition.

So that the several Places, Qualities and Degrees of Men are to be consider'd in this matter: and as many more things are necessary and convenient for some, than for others, so may they be lawfully desir'd and sought after; which is the sense of the Apostle, when he bids us to *provide things honest*, that is decent and honourable *in the sight of all Men*, *Rom. 12. 17.* This for the *daily Bread*. But,

Thirdly, What is meant by the Particle *Our* daily Bread? This was not added for nothing, but to give us to understand that every one is to live upon his own, and not another's Bread: 'Tis the Idle Drone that lives upon others Labour, whereas we are requir'd to *work with our hands the thing*

thing that is good, that we may eat our own Bread, and likewise give to him that needeth, Ephes. 4. 28. 2 Theff. 3. 12. The Bread we here pray for is not stolen Bread, no Bread of Deceit, taken out of another's Mouth; but it must be our own Bread gotten by our own Labour, not procur'd by idle begging or stealing: it must be Bread gotten by honest and just Ways, by the Sweat of our own Brows, not by Fraud, Sacrilege or Oppression. 'Twas the first Ordinance of God, that in the Sweat of their Brows every one should earn and eat their Bread, not tear it from others by Violence, Rapine or Injustice. Bread honestly gotten is commonly sweet, and hath the Blessing of God going along with it; whereas the Bread of Deceit is still follow'd with a Curse: and tho' stolen Waters may be sweet in the Mouth, yet they turn to Gall and Wormwood in the Belly, and prove always bitter in the latter end.

This for our *daily Bread*, which we see is what we may rightfully call our own; and this we may ask in such a measure, as is not only suited to the Necessities of Nature, but to the Charge and Burden of those Places and Stations wherein God hath set us: Only care must be taken that we suffer not Ambition and Covetousness to impole upon us, by creating more Needs than we ought, nor measuring our Necessities rather by inordinate Desires than any real Wants; and likewise that we spend not the Overplus in Riot and Luxury, for that is the Bread of the Poor which we take out of their Mouths when we spend it upon our Lusts. But,

Fourthly, What is meant by limiting our Request to *this Day*, or asking *day by day our daily Bread*? Why, this is added to signify our total Dependence upon God, that we subsist continually upon his Bounty: we thereby disclaim all Confidence in ourselves, or in any other means to maintain and support us beside the Divine Providence; not relying upon any Store we have laid up, or any Estate we have gotten; not trusting to any Contrivance or Industry of our own, nor any Succour or Relief from others: but looking every day for the Bread of that Day to be dealt out to us, and receiving it as a constant Dole at God's hands. Again,

We thereby cast off all inordinate Cares and Fears about to-morrow, owning that sufficient to the Day is the Bread thereof; we thereby shew, that we are not too solicitous for

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for the future, but cast our whole Care upon God who careth for us, and knoweth that we have need of all these things.

"We affect not (as one well expresses it) to be so much before-hand, as not to need God's constant Assistance; and therefore we ask not for what may suffice for a long time, for many Years, Months or Days, but that God would give us to day, or day by day, what is needful for us." Moreover,

We are hereby taught to depend, not only on the Divine Power and All-sufficiency to provide for us, but to rely on his continual Goodness and Readiness to help us:

"Desiring (as another well directs on these words) not to have our Portion all at once, or in our own hands, lest we should be too lavish of it; but making God our Store-house, to whom, as to the Fountain of all good Things, we every day resort; being well assur'd of the Constancy of his Love and Liberality towards us, and that he will be as able and willing to relieve us to-morrow as he is to-day: And therefore as the *Israelites* went every day to gather Manna, that no day might pass without a *Memento* of God's Providence, so are we directed to go to him day by day for our daily Bread, to make us always mindful of our dependence upon him."

And this we are taught to do, not for ourselves only, but for all others; for whom we are bound to pray, saying, in the plural Number, Give *Us*, day by day, our daily Bread.

But what need have they to ask their daily Bread, whose Barns and Bags are full, and have Goods laid up for many Years? Why very great, as well as others: For,

1. All earthly Treasures are subject to Rust and Rapine; the *Moths may corrupt them, and Thieves may break thro' and steal. Trust not in uncertain Riches* (says the Apostle) *but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.* Beside,

2. The Rich live upon God's Bounty as well as the Poor; 'tis he that gives them what they have, and may withdraw it from them when he pleases; and therefore 'tis but fit and reasonable that they should daily look up to him from whom all their Mercies flow.

3. All the Comfort of Wealth and Riches depends entirely on God's Blessing, without which, they are all sapless and insignificant: for neither can our Food nourish, nor our Clothes warm, nor our Houses defend us without his Blessing:

Blessing: and therefore as all need it, so are they all to join in asking of it. By which we see, in the

Last Place, What it is we pray for in this Petition. When we desire God *to give*, we own him the Author and Donor of all our Mercies, and that we receive every thing by way of Gift at his hands.

When we say *Give us*, we shew our Love to and Sympathy with the Brethren; that we tender each others Wants, and beg the Supply of them equally with our own.

When we ask for *Bread*, we pray for all the necessary and comfortable Supports of Human Life, all that is requisite to carry us thro' this World, and is needful for the relief of Body and Soul.

When we ask for *daily Bread*, we seek a continual Supply of all our Necessities, which daily and hourly grow upon us, and likewise for such a Supply of them, as may sute the Condition wherein God hath placed us.

When we say, Give us *our Bread*, we ask only what we can justly come by, and lawfully call our own, without coveting what is another's.

Finally, when we say, Give us *this day, or day by day*, &c. we shew our Trust in God's Providence, that we are not solicitous for to-morrow, that we seek not great things, or to lay up for many Years, but are content with our daily Allowance, depending upon him from day to day, without anxiety or distrust.

Now because many things are requir'd to the producing and obtaining our daily Bread, we are to look upon them as included in this Petition. As,

1. Because we cannot have this Bread without seasonable Weather, and the kindly Influences of the Heavens, we here pray for such moderate Showers and fruitful Seasons, as may enable us to reap the Fruits of the Earth in due Season.

2. Because we cannot enjoy our daily Bread without Peace and Tranquillity, we here deprecate War, and pray for Peace, that every one may taste of his own Vine, and peaceably sit under his own Fig-tree.

3. Because we cannot live in Peace, nor quietly eat our own Bread without Government, we here pray for Princes and Magistrates, that *under them we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.*

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4. Because, without Health of Body and Mind, we can neither earn or enjoy our daily Bread, we here pray for such a measure of Health and Strength as is necessary to support Government, and to give us the taste and relish of what we possess by it.

Lastly, Because without God's Blessing all things will prove ineffectual, we here implore the Divine Blessing upon all that we have or do, that God would give us Success in our Affairs, and prosper the Work of our Hands, that the Staff of Bread may never fail us, nor we fall into Want or Poverty.

This, and all other things needful to the preservation and comfort of this present Life, are included and implor'd in our daily Bread. But how are we to pray for it? This must be known too, because *some ask and receive not, because they ask amiss.* And,

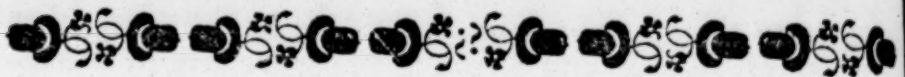
1. We must ask with Humility and Submission to the Divine Will, being deeply sensible both of our want and unworthiness of God's Mercy, and likewise of our inability to help ourselves.

2. We must ask in Faith, or a full Assurance of being heard in what is fit for us, for *Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is; and he is Faithful that hath promis'd.*

3. We must ask it heartily and affectionately, as a Beggar does an Alms, who must starve and perish without it.

Lastly, We must ask it diligently, that is, our Endeavours must accompany our Petitions; we may not hope to be fed by Miracles, nor will our daily Bread drop into our Mouths without Labour: no, God hath order'd that *he that will not work, shall not eat*, and therefore we must employ ourselves in some honest Calling; and if we will have our daily Bread, we must diligently seek it. To conclude, we see where to apply ourselves for Necessaries, and how our Wants may be supply'd: for God Almighty cannot hear his Children cry for Bread without giving; and if earthly Parents know how to give to their Children, how much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them?





DISCOURSE IX.

LUKE xi. 4.

And forgive us our Sins, for we also forgive them that are indebted to us.

IN the foregoing Petition, which is the first that concerns ourselves, we beg the Supply of all our Temporal Wants: the two following respect Spiritual Blessings; in which, after we have ask'd our daily Bread for the Sustainance of our Bodies, we proceed to beg the Pardon of our Sins, for the Peace and Welfare of our Souls. And indeed,

Without this the former can be of no avail to us; for if our Sins are not forgiven, no earthly thing can prove a Blessing to us, our sweetest Comforts will be imbitter'd with a Curse, and the Fear of Divine Vengeance sour all our Abundance. This is evident in the *Israelites* of old, to whom, tho God gave Quails and Manna, and fed them with Bread from Heaven, yet their murmuring and disobedience mar'd the Comfort of them, and mingled all their Blessings with a Curse; for *while the Meat was in their Mouths, the Wrath of God fell upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them*, Psal. 78. 31. 'Tis not only coarse but cursed Fare, that is attended with the Wrath of God; and the Staff of Bread will be but a slender Support, when the Guilt of Sin lies heavy upon us: and therefore this Petition for Pardon is fitly join'd to that for our daily Bread, the latter receiving all its Virtue and Sweetness from the former; and as much as the Soul is to be prefer'd above the Body, so much ought our Petitions for the one to exceed our Requests for the other, since Sin poisons all our Food, and without the Pardon of it, does but fatten us for the Slaughter.

In treating therefore of this Petition, I must enquire,

First, What we understand here by *Sins*.

Secondly, What by the *forgiving of Sins*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, What is imply'd in asking Forgiveness of them.

Fourthly, I must speak to the Motive or Condition of it, which is the Forgiving of others. For the

First, All Sin (as St. *John* tells us) is the transgressing of a Law: And that is done, either by omitting what it requires, or committing what it forbids; the former are Sins of Omission, the latter of Commission.

Now of these Laws, some are purely Divine, given to us immediately by God himself, and relate intirely to the Worship and Duty we owe to him, the violating whereof is the sinning directly and immediately against God.

Others have the Addition of Human Authority, and relate chiefly to the Justice and Duty we owe to Men, the breaking whereof is the sinning against our Neighbour; tho these too, having the stamp of Divine as well as Human Authority, are likewise a sinning against God, and a violation of the Duty we are to pay to both. And of both these kinds of Sins we are to understand this Petition, wherein we desire God to remit our Offences against him, as we remit those that are committed against us. Now these Offences are variously express'd by the Evangelists in the Holy Gospel.

St. *Matthew* styles them *ὀφειλήματα*, Debts, *Mat. 6. 12.* *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* We all owe unto God a Debt of Obedience, which, as we are his Creatures, we stand oblig'd to pay, being indebted to his Power and Goodness for all that we have. The non-payment of this Debt of Duty contracts another Debt or Obligation to Punishment, whereby we become obnoxious to his Justice, and liable to be cast into the Prison of Hell, till we have paid the utmost Farthing. We owe likewise to one another the Debt of Honesty and Humanity, which by the Laws of God and Nature we are requir'd to pay, by neglecting whereof we are in debt to them, and owe them Satisfaction: so that by transgressing the Laws of God and Man, we become obnoxious to both, and stand indebted either to make Reparation, or to undergo Punishment. Again, these Offences are sometimes styl'd *ἁμαρτία*, Trespases; *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* By these we understand, not only the Failures of our Duty to Mankind, but the doing of Wrongs and Injuries; which increases our Guilt, and renders us more liable to Punishment.

But

But what St. Matthew styles *Debts* and *Trespases*, St. Luke here calls *ἀμαρτίας*, *Sins*; which amount to the same thing, being all so many Violations of the Laws of God, and the Duty we owe to Men: for every Sin makes us a Debtor to Divine and Human Justice, and every Trespas exposes us to the Censure and Punishment of both. This for the *Sins*. But,

Secondly, What is meant by *Forgiving our Sins*? This being at large explain'd in the Tenth Article of the Creed, I shall not here repeat, but refer the Reader to it.

In short, as the forgiving of a Debt is blotting out the Score, and cancelling the Bond that oblig'd to Payment: And as the forgiving a Trespas, is the passing by the Wrong, without demanding farther Amends or Satisfaction; so the forgiving of Sins is the freeing a Person from the Guilt of them, and releasing the Obligation to Punishment due to them. For all Sin being an Affront to the Authority of our Maker, and a Breach of his Righteous Laws, justly incurs the Divine Vengeance, and binds the Sinner over to the Sentence of Eternal Death, this being the proper Wages and Demerit of it. Now the absolving of any from this Guilt, and taking off this Penalty, is the forgiving of it. And as a Malefactor lying under the Sentence of Death, is said to be pardon'd, when the Execution is not only respited, but the Sentence of Death revok'd: even so the Sinner is said to be forgiven, when he is releas'd from the just Punishment threatned and denounc'd against him; which is too plain to need any farther Explication. But,

Thirdly, What is imply'd in asking Forgiveness of Sin?

1. Here is imply'd a deep and serious Sense of our Sins, together with the Guilt and Heinousness of them; for he who asks Pardon, owns a Fault, and is sensible of his need of it: This is a fit Qualification of a Supplicant, and disposes him to receive Mercy, which is ever most readily bestow'd on those that are most sensible of the want of it; whereas they that feel not the lack of it, will never seek or find it. And therefore we are here taught to address unto God, with an humble sense of our manifold Infirmities and Miscarriages; not like the proud Pharisee, boasting of his own Righteousness, and thanking God that *we are better than other Men*; but with the poor Publican, *smiting on the Breast*, and saying, *Lord be merciful to me, a Sinner*.

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This is here suppos'd, for the begging Forgiveness, is both owning the Guilt, and craving of Mercy.

2. Here is imply'd, not only the inward Sense, but the outward Confession and Acknowledgment of our Sins; this is farther requisite to the obtaining Mercy, for we can neither ask nor hope for Pardon, without confessing our Faults: *He that covereth his Sin (says the Wise-Man) shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find Mercy.* And St. John, to the same purpose: *If we say we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us; but if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them:* 1 John 1. 8, 9. We put a cheat upon ourselves, to look for Pardon without Confession; and therefore this must be evermore suppos'd in our Petition for it.

3. The asking for Pardon, implies the sense of our Inability to obtain it of ourselves; for none will ask that of another, which he can do for himself. Indeed, the least Sin has too much Guilt for us to expiate or remove, 'tis a Debt we can never satisfy for ourselves, and an Affront for which we can never make sufficient Amends, and therefore seek it elsewhere: this is imply'd in this Petition for Mercy; and our seeking Forgiveness, supposes us to be lost and undone without it.

4. Here is imply'd our Trust in God, and Faith in the Merits of a Redeemer. To ask Forgiveness at God's hands, supposes him both able and willing to give it; and because an Atonement was necessary to that end, and Divine Justice requir'd Satisfaction, our begging of it supposes a Satisfaction made, and our Reliance upon the Merits and Virtue of it. To hope for Mercy without this, were Preumption and Vanity; and to ask for Pardon without a Satisfaction, would be to ask Impossibilities, and to set the Mercy of God at variance with his Justice. Now because *without Shedding of Blood there is no Remission*; and the Blood of Bulls and Goats, or any other Creature, was not of Value sufficient for this Expiation: our Belief of a Satisfaction supposes the Sacrifice of Christ, whose Blood alone cleanses us from all Sin; and our asking Forgiveness, implies a Faith in his Blood, from whence all our Mercies flow.

Thus we see the Sense of this Petition, and what is imply'd in it. But how are we to ask this *Forgiveness*? Why,

1. This must be done with Self-abasement, and a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness; not claiming it upon any

Desert of ours, but wholly casting ourselves upon the Merits and Satisfaction of our Surety; thankfully owning the Wisdom of God in contriving, and his Goodness in accepting this Method of Reconciliation.

2. We must ask it heartily, and with the same earnestness that a condemn'd Malefactor seeks and sues for a Pardon: And seeking the good Things of this Life, we are to moderate our Desires, and refer all to the divine Will; but in asking for Mercy and Pardon, we cannot be too importunate. Here we are allow'd to wrestle with God, and to take no denial, being utterly lost and undone for ever without it.

3. We must ask Forgiveness with penitent Hearts, and Resolutions to return no more to Folly; for 'tis the *confessing and forsaking of Sin*, that hath the Promise of *finding Mercy*. Without this we do but *mock God*, and ask leave farther to provoke him: To sin and confess, and to confess and sin again, is to act in a Circle, that will involve us in endless Misery; and he justly forfeits all Title to a Pardon, that returns again to the same Enormities: and therefore all Petitions for Pardon must be ever attended with Contrition and Amendment.

Lastly, To obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins, we must ask it with Hearts ready and willing to forgive others: And this will lead me, in the next place, to

Consider the Motive and Condition annext to this Petition; in which we pray to God to *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*.

By Trespases here we see are meant in general, all the Violations of Divine and Human Laws. Those which more immediately cross the Duty we owe to our Maker, are styl'd Trespases against God; those which are more directly level'd against our Neighbour, are said to be Trespases against us: insomuch, that when we neglect the Worship, or profane the Name of God, we commit a Trespas against him; when any Hurt is done to our Person, Goods or Name, they are said to trespass against us. Now these latter Offences committed against us, must be remitted by us, if we expect Remission of the former, which we have committed against God; for our Saviour here teaches to pray God to *forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive others*. This is frequently inculcated upon us elsewhere; *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*, Luke 6. 37. And if ye forgive

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not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive yours, Mat. 6. 15.

But must we put up all Wrongs done to us without seeking Satisfaction, upon pain of forfeiting all Favour and Forgiveness at God's hands?

No: there are some slight Trespases that do us little or no harm, these Christian Charity, which *suffereth long*, wills us to pass by without seeking Revenge or Reparation; but where the Damage or Danger is greater, where Men by having a few lesser Wrongs remitted, are embolden'd to commit more and greater, there a legal Satisfaction may well enough be sought, to repair past and prevent future Injuries: And yet here too, where the Trespases are involuntary, where the Wrong done is repented of and amended; and where no greater Satisfaction can be had, there we are requir'd frankly to forgive them.

This is our Case in respect to our Offences against God, to whom we have run on score beyond all possible Satisfaction; and if we expect that God should *forgive us our Debts*, we must *forgive them that are indebted to us*, without which we can pretend no title to Favour; for 'tis upon these Terms only that we are here taught to ask it, desiring God to forgive us as we forgive others. We read in the Gospel, that he who *took his Fellow-Servant by the Throat for forty Pence*, when his Master had just before *forgiven him a thousand Talents*, was cast into Prison, and doom'd to stay there till he should pay the utmost Farthing; even so (says our Saviour) *will your Heavenly Father do with you, if ye forgive not one another their Trespases.*

In short then, we see the Condition of our Pardon, together with the manner of asking it: which must be with Hearts full of Charity, and Readiness to forgive others: for God expects that we should be so dispos'd towards our Brethren, as we desire him to be towards us; which is no more than what the Golden Rule of Equity, of *doing as we would be done by*, requires from us. And therefore we are bid to be reconcil'd to our Brother, before we offer our Gift for a Reconciliation with God; emptying our Hearts of all Malice, Grudges and Prejudices against any, that we may *lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting*: 'Tis this way we beg it, and if we do not or will not forgive others, we put a Bar to our own Requests, and shut ourselves out of all Plea for Pardon.

To conclude all, Let us frequently and fervently put up this Petition for Mercy and Pardon, considering not only the Excellence of this Benefit, but the absolute Necessity we stand in of it: for as *blest and thrice happy are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sin is cover'd*; so miserable and undone for ever are all they, whose Transgressions remain on the Score, and are left to be reckon'd for at the last Day.

DISCOURSE X.

LUKE xi. 4.

And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

HAVING in the preceding Petition pray'd for the Pardon of all our past Sins, we are directed in this last to pray for Grace to prevent all future Transgressions: And because there are many Baits and Snares laid for us by the Devil, the World and the Flesh, the three grand Enemies of our Soul, we are taught to say, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* 'Twill be in vain to hope for Pardon without Amendment; and because there are many things that may obstruct both, we are to watch and pray, that we be not inveigled or betray'd by them.

And here from our Saviour's prescribing two Petitions for our Soul, and but one for our Body, we may observe that our Care for the one should be double to our Concern for the other; and for good reason too, the Soul being that noble and immortal part of us that will live for ever, and the Body only a frail perishing Substance which will shortly moulder into Dust.

Now this Petition for the Safety and Welfare of our Souls, consists of two parts;

The one more general, to be preserv'd from all Temptations.

The other more particular, to be deliver'd from the Evil One, and all the Miseries that proceed from his Temptations.

I begin with the first, in which we pray to be preserv'd from all Temptations, in those words, *And lead us not into Temptation*: where it will be requisite to explain,

First, What is here meant by *Temptation*.

Secondly, How God may be said to *lead us in or out of Temptation*.

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we desire him *not to lead us into Temptation*. For the

First, Temptation in the general sense signifies any kind of Trial or Probation of any Person. 'Tis sometimes taken in a good sense, for the trial of a Man's Virtue or Constancy; and that is done either by some difficult Act of Obedience, so God tempted *Abraham* by bidding him to sacrifice his Son, *Gen. 22. 1.* or by some great Suffering and Affliction, so he try'd the Patience of *Job*, call'd by *St. Peter* the fiery Trial: both which are in Scripture styl'd Temptations, because by them the Temper, Dispositions, and Intentions of Men are discover'd, and their Virtues exercis'd and improv'd.

Sometimes again, Temptation is taken in a bad sense, for the enticing or drawing Men into Sin. And this is done either by way of Terror and Affrightment; so Troubles and Persecutions are call'd *Temptations*, because by them many are drawn and discourag'd from their Duty: or else by way of Allurement and Sollicitation to Evil; so Satan is styl'd *the Tempter*, and the Profits, Pleasures, and Honours of the World are call'd *Temptations*, because by them many are ensnar'd and drawn aside to their own Destruction. Now 'tis in this last and worse sense, that we are here and generally elsewhere to understand Temptation, *viz.* for an Allurement unto Sin, a Stumbling-block, a Snare, or an Occasion of falling into Evil: In which sense *St. Paul* tells us, that *they who will be rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many sinful and hurtful Lusts, which drown them in Destruction and Perdition*; 1 Tim. 6. 9. This for Temptation. But,

Secondly, How is God said to *lead us in or out of Temptation*?

In answer to which, I say,

1. If we take Temptations for Trials and Afflictions, so God is said to lead us into Temptation, when he lays any

Trouble or Calamity upon us himself, or permits it to be done by others. Thus he is said to tempt *Job*, by laying his own hand heavy upon him, and suffering the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* to despoil him of all his Goods. And thus he frequently tries the Patience of his own People in the Furnace of Affliction, by which he designs to purge out their Dross and refine them as Gold purify'd in the Fire. And as he is said to lead us into Temptation, when he lays any Trouble or Calamity upon us, so does he lead us out of it, when he takes off his Hand, and removes the Affliction from us, which is the sense of the Apostle in those words: *There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the Temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it* 1 Cor. 10. 13. But,

2. If we take Temptation (as it commonly is) for an Enticement or Sollicitation to Evil, so God cannot be properly said to lead any into Temptation; for that would make him the Author of Sin, and shew him to be the Encourager of that, of which he hath declar'd himself the Avenger, which would be Blasphemy to affirm or imagine. And therefore St. *James* cautions us, *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man*; James 1. 13.

But the God cannot in any direct, proper, or persuasive way tempt any to Sin, yet he may be said sometime indirectly and accidentally to lead us into Temptation.

(1.) When in the Course of his Providence he propounds those Objects, and affords those Opportunities, that excite our Corruptions, and prove to us an Occasion of falling. Thus Wealth, Honour, Beauty, Power, and the like, tho' in themselves not only harmless, but useful things, do yet many times administer to Pride, Luxury, Lust, and Oppression, and become the accidental Causes of much Evil. *Achan* was tempted by the glittering of the *Wedge of Gold*. *David* was ensnar'd by the Beauty of *Bathsheba*: And *Solomon* tells us of *Riches* given sometimes to the Owners thereof to their hurt. Not that they are so design'd by God who gives them, but that Mens corrupt Natures too often take occasion to abuse and pervert the Blessings of Heaven to their own Destruction, and so turn the Instruments of Good into the Occasions of Evil. And therefore we find *Agur* praying against *Riches*, lest being full he should be tempted

to deny God, and say *who is the Lord?* and likewise against Poverty, lest being empty, he should be tempted to *steal*, and take the Name of God in vain : which is in effect not to be led into Temptation by either.

(2.) God is said to lead into Temptation by permitting the Devil to tempt us: Thus he let loose Satan upon *Job*, who tempted him to Impatience and Cursing of God; yea, we read, that Christ himself was *led by the Spirit of God to be tempted by the Devil*, Mat. 4. 1. Our Saviour told St. Peter, that *Satan had desir'd him, that he might sift him as Wheat*, Luke 22. 31. but he had pray'd for him, that his Faith should not fail, nor himself be foil'd by him. Tho the evil Spirits are all under the Command of God, and can have no power over us but what is given from above, yet they sometimes obtain leave to tempt us, for the Exercise of our Graces, and the Trial of our Constancy; yea, sometimes God Almighty not only permits, but gives them a Commission to this purpose: Thus the evil Spirit was bid to go and *persuade Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead*, 1 Kings 22. 20, 21, 22. And the Lord is said to *move David against Israel, to go and number the People*, 2 Sam. 24. 1. tho this is elsewhere ascrib'd to the Solicitation of Satan, 1 Chron. 21. 1. And thus God may be said to *lead every one into Temptation*, whom he suffers to be tempted.

Lastly, God is said to *lead us into Temptation*, by withholding his Grace from us, and leaving us under the power of Temptation: Thus he is said to have *left Hezekiah, to try what was in his Heart*, 2 Chron. 32. 31. And the Psalmist tells us of the *Israelites*, that when they refus'd to hearken to the Voice of the Lord, *God gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts, and to walk in their own Counsel*; which led them on headlong to their own Destruction: Psal. 81. 12.

These are the chief, if not the only ways, whereby God is said to *lead us into Temptation*: By which we learn,

Thirdly, What we pray for, when we say, *Lead us not into Temptation*; by which we are not directed to pray simply and absolutely against all Trials by Affliction and Adversity, which are sometimes of greater Use and Benefit to us than Plenty and Prosperity: for tho no Affliction for the present be joyous but grievous, nevertheless they oft-times yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness to them that are exer-

cis'd therewith: and these light Afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. For which reason we are bid not so much to pray against, as to prepare for them, to arm ourselves against they come, and to make a right use of them, when it shall please God to send them: yea, St. James wills us, to count it all Joy, when we fall into divers Temptations, knowing that the Trial of our Faith worketh Patience, and that these things redound not only to our own Good, but to the Praise and Glory of God.

But that which we are here taught to pray against, is in general against all the Enticements and Allurements to Sin, which is the Bane of our Peace, and the Ruin both of Body and Soul. More particularly we pray,

1. To be preserv'd from all the Inveiglements of sensible Objects, and from all the Occasions and Opportunities inviting to any Evil, as from the Influence of bad Counsel, evil Company, wicked Customs, and bad Examples; from all danger from the Frowns or Flatteries of the World, that we be neither discourag'd by the one, nor betray'd by the other: But that God in his Providence would so order things, that we may not be endanger'd by them; and chiefly that he would keep us from those Objects and Opportunities that are apt to excite or work upon our Corruptions, and prove to us an Occasion of falling.

2. We pray that God would not withdraw from us the Assistance of his Grace, or leave us to follow our own Hearts Lust, which is one of the sorest Judgments that can betide us; for we are naturally feeble and impotent Creatures, unable of ourselves to guide our steps aright, and likewise too prone and willing to be misled: *Our Hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; our Lusts make a Party against ourselves, and are ever ready to betray us: so that if God withhold the Assistance of his Grace, we are in a helpless and dangerous Condition, and to be left to ourselves must be a dismal Calamity: and therefore we are taught to pray that God would not take away his Holy Spirit from us, nor leave us to the unsafe Conduct of our own Spirit, which will not only lead us into Temptation, but give all the Venom and Advantage to it; for then are we most dangerously tempted, when we are drawn away of our own Hearts Lusts and entic'd, James i. 14.*

Lastly, we pray that God would not permit Satan or any evil Spirit to tempt us; that he would not slacken the

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Chain in which they are held, nor let them loose upon us; but that he would so bridle and restrain their Fury, that either they may not be able to assault us, or that we may be kept from being foil'd or endanger'd by them. In a word we pray here that we may neither *enter into Temptation* ourselves, nor be *led into it* by any other. And this will lead me to consider the

2d Branch of this Petition, in those Words, *But deliver us from Evil*; which is not a distinct Petition, but only an Illustration and Enforcement of the former. In the Original it is *ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ*, *from the Evil one*, which St. Chrysostom interprets of the Devil, who is frequently styl'd the Tempter, that seduceth us into Evil; from whose Wiles and Devices we pray to be deliver'd, that Satan may have no power over us, nor possession of us, but that we may escape the fiery Darts of that Wicked one, or be kept from being hurt or wounded by them.

Tertullian understands it more largely of all Evil of Sin, from whose Power and Dominion we pray to be deliver'd, that no Sin or Wickedness whatsoever may so reign in our mortal Bodies, as to make us obey it in the Lusts thereof.

But both these being included in the former Clause to avoid Repetition, which may not well be suppos'd in this short form, 'twill be requisite to add a farther Sense of these words; and that is to understand by *Evil* here in the Close, all the bad Effects of Sin, or the Evil of Punishment, from which we likewise pray to be deliver'd. For having before ask'd to be preserv'd from the Commission of Sin, and all the Temptations leading thereunto, we here farther pray to be preserv'd from the sad Effects and Consequents of it, and that we may be safe from all Evils, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal.

As for Temporal Evils, as Afflictions, Sicknes, Losses, and Disappointments in worldly Affairs, evil Reports, Reproaches, and the Contradiction of Sinners, with other such earthly Calamities; these we are to deprecate as our Saviour did the bitter Cup, with submission to the Divine Will, saying as he in the like case did, *Father, if it be possible, let these things pass from us*. Nevertheless, because these may be sometimes necessary, and tend to our greater good, we are to add with him, *Not my Will, but thine be done*.

As for spiritual Evils, such as Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, a wounded Conscience, the want of Love, Fear and Reverence towards God; of Good-will and Cha-

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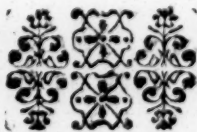
rity to our Neighbour; of Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity towards ourselves; with such-like spiritual Maladies: these being in themselves evil, and such as can no way tend to be turn'd to any good, we are to pray absolutely against them, and heartily desire to be freed and deliver'd from them.

As for Eternal Evils, such as the Wrath of God, the Worm that never dies, and the Fire that never goeth out, the unpardonable Sin, the Horrors of Despair, and the Torments of the Damned, with all the other doleful Consequents of final Impenitence; these we are most earnestly to pray against, and never to give God Almighty or ourselves any Rest, without some hopes of being deliver'd from them.

But because our most earnest and affectionate Prayers against these Evils, will find no Answer or Acceptance without using the proper and prescrib'd means to that end, we must be ever mindful to add our best Endeavours to all our Petitions, to render them successful, using our utmost Care and Caution in these matters; which we should the rather do, because our Enemies are many and mighty, vigilant, potent, and politick, *seeking whom they may devour*. In a word, Because the World hath many Baits and Snares to intrap us; because Satan hath many Wiles and Stratagems to circumvent us, and our own corrupt and deceitful Hearts are too apt to join issue with those ghostly Enemies, and to betray us into their hands; we are always to *watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation*.

And because the Evil and Danger of these things are unspeakably great both in this and the next World, we are not only to pray, *not to be led into Temptation*, but to be *deliver'd from the Evils* of it.

Thus I have finish'd the Preface and Petitions of this Divine Prayer; there remains the Doxology and Close of all, which shall be handled in the next.



DISCOURSE XI.

MAT. vi. 13.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THESE Words contain the Doxology or Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer; which by the Particle *For*, that ushers them in, seem to be added as a Reason for our putting up the foregoing Petitions, and as a Ground of Hope and Confidence of obtaining them. I shall not here nicely enquire why this Doxology is omitted by St. Luke, as it is likewise in many *Latin* and *Greek* Copies, which follow'd that Evangelist; 'tis sufficient for us that 'tis mention'd by St. *Matthew*, and prescrib'd by our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount: and our Church has wisely enough comply'd with both, in prescribing it to be us'd sometimes with and sometimes without it. But because Prayer cannot be complete without Praises, we are directed still to use it in our daily and ordinary Devotions; it being very unfit to ask of God the Supply of all our Wants, without returning him the Praises and Acknowledgments due for all his Blessings. And therefore our Blessed Saviour, who taught us to begin our Petitions with the Glory of God, that his *Name may be hallow'd, his Kingdom come, and his Will be done by all the Inhabitants of the Earth*; has likewise will'd us to close up all with an Acknowledgment of *his Kingdom, Power, and Glory*: thereby signifying, that his Glory is to be the Beginning and End of all our Actions; and likewise directing us to ascribe that Honour and Glory to him ourselves, which we pray may be given him by all others.

Praising God being then a necessary Part of Prayer, 'twill be requisite to know wherein it consists; and that, we are here told, is in an humble Acknowledgment and Adoration of the Divine Attributes and Perfections, whereby we are encourag'd not only to pray to him, but to look for a gracious Answer and Accomplishment of our Petitions. This

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is the Sense and Drift of these words, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever and ever; Amen.* Where every Word adds Strength to our Faith, and is a firm Prop of our Hope and Confidence in him; as will evidently appear in the handling of them. And,

1. We are here taught to praise God by owning his Kingdom; *For thine is the Kingdom.* By this we are to understand that universal Empire and Dominion, which God hath over all his Creatures, whereby he orders and disposes all things according to the Counsel of his own Will; and more particularly, that spiritual and peculiar Kingdom and Authority which he exerciseth over his Church and People, guiding them *by his Counsel here*, and hereafter *bringing them to Glory*. Both these Kingdoms we find the Psalmist frequently acknowledging to be his; *Thou hast prepar'd thy Throne in the Heavens, and thy Kingdom ruleth over all, Psal. 103. 19.* And elsewhere, *The Lord is King, be the People never so impatient; he sitteth between the Cherubims, be the Earth never so unquiet.* To this Kingdom all the Princes and Potentates of the Earth owe Subjection, who must lay down their Crowns at his Call, and resign their Kingdoms to him that gave them. Of his Kingdom of Grace, whereby he reigns in the Hearts of his People, we find frequent mention in Holy Scripture.

Now this affords a firm Foundation for our Faith, and may secure to us the Success of our Petitions; for if God be King, we may be sure he will take care of and provide for his People: and as we are to pay Subjection to him, so may we expect Protection from him. When we are bid to pray that God's Kingdom may come, we may rest assur'd that so it will; for the Kingdom being his, he will not fail to exalt and enlarge it. Neither may we doubt of receiving from him all that is needful for our selves; for he hath not only the Bowels of a Father, but the Mercy and Clemency of a gracious King; and if we tread his Courts and attend his Throne, he is ready to receive and grant our Requests: and being persuaded of this, we address to him as the great King of Heaven and Earth, and say, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

2. We are here directed to praise God, by ascribing to him all Power and Strength; *For thine is the Power.* By this we are to understand his All-sufficient, Infinite, and Almighty Power, whereby he is able to do all things, and nothing can resist his Will. This is another Reason and

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farther Encouragement to hope for the Success of our Petitions, because we address to him, *who hath all Power both in Heaven and Earth, and can do whatever pleaseth him.* Indeed, were our Prayers directed to deaf and dumb Idols, those impotent Deities of the Heathens, that can neither hear nor help, we might well enough be discourag'd from bringing any more such vain Oblations, and might soon grow weary of such a bootless and unprofitable Devotion: but since we pray to the omnipotent Creator and Disposer of all things, who is able to hear and answer our Petitions; yea, who can do more than we are able to ask or think, we may address with Confidence to so able and willing a Benefactor: for he being the Fountain of all Grace and Strength, we may safely rely upon him for the Relief of all our Wants, and come to him for all that is necessary for this Life or a better; backing our Requests for both, with this comfortable Motive, *For thine is the Kingdom.*

3. We are here taught to praise God, by ascribing all Glory to him; *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* By this we acknowledge all Honour and Reverence, all Love and Thankfulness to be due to God only; and consequently, that we may not assume any part of his Glory to ourselves, but must render it all intirely to him. God hath declar'd himself to be very tender and *jealous* of his Honour, and that *he will not give his Glory to another.* Herod, for taking to himself the Honour that was due to God only, was *eaten up of Worms*; his Arrogance was chastiz'd by those contemptible Creatures, and he who aspir'd to be a God, became a Prey to the very Worms: Which shews us the Danger of robbing God of that Honour which he claims as his, and expects to be paid to him.

But as we forfeit the Favour, and incur the Frowns of Heaven by robbing God of the Honour of his Mercies, so do we engage his Goodness still to help us, by rendring to him the Glory of them: and therefore our Saviour, to add Force and Efficacy to our Petitions, hath will'd us to say in the Close of them, *For thine is the Glory*; whereby presenting our Necessities before him, we implore the Influences of his Grace, that we may the better shew forth his Glory. By this he hath taught us to acknowledge our own Vileness that we can neither do or deserve any thing of ourselves; as also to magnify and adore the infinite Greatness of God, who is able at all times to relieve and succour us: therefore willing us to say with the Angels in the *Revelation*,
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Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, and Praise, and Glory; and with the Psalmist, Not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the Glory. Which Confessions give a mighty Efficacy to our Prayers, and contribute very much to the desir'd Issue and Success of them.

4. Here is added a farther Encouragement from the Eternity of these Divine Perfections; for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory *for ever and ever*. His Kingdom is not like that of earthly Monarchs, short, moveable, and uncertain; but *the Lord remaineth a King for ever, and his Dominion endureth thro'out all Ages: Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and thy Kingdom is an Everlasting Kingdom.* Again,

His Power is not like ours, deriv'd, limited, and depending upon another, but from himself, infinite, independent, and indefectible. Our Strength often fails us, and the greatest Abilities decay, insomuch, that we may be helpful to-day, and helpless to-morrow; but *God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and with him is no Variableness, neither shadow of Change.* Moreover,

His Glory is not like that of the World, fading and transitory, that glitters for a while, and then vanishes away; but permanent, immutable, and eternal in the Heavens: nothing can fully or eclipse his Glory, which is above the reach of Envy or Detraction, and shines for ever with a bright and never-fading Lustre; even so *thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever and ever.*

All these are so many powerful Motives to lead us to him, and firm Foundations of Hope and Confidence in him.

He is a King for ever, and therefore will be sure always to provide for and protect his loving Subjects.

His Power is everlasting, and therefore will be ever able as well as willing to help and defend them.

His Glory is for ever and ever, and therefore the cherishing Influences of it can never fail his People, but will shine out upon them to all Eternity.

And now what may we not expect from so powerful and glorious a King? What can be too hard for Omnipotence to effect for us? or what too great for infinite Bounty to bestow? These are the Encouragements our Saviour here adds to our Petitions, which may serve as so many Props to our Faith, and the Pillars of our Hope and Confidence in God, and what greater Motives can we have to draw nigh to him, and to make our Requests known to so

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merciful and glorious a Majesty, who is so able and willing to help us? Wherefore to draw to a Conclusion, we may learn from hence at all times to address unto God with full Assurance of Faith, lifting up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting; so shall we find Mercy and Grace to help in time of need.

Thus I have with all possible Plainness and Brevity gone thro' the several Parts and Petitions of the Lord's Prayer: which begins with *Our Father*, to teach us to come to him with the Boldness of Children: and ends with *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory*, to encourage us to address with the Confidence of Subjects; and both will us to rely upon his Ability and Readiness to relieve us in all our Exigences.

There remains only the concluding Particle *Amen*, which being directed to be added to this and all our other Prayers compos'd by it, must be a little briefly explain'd. To which end we may observe,

1. That this Word is us'd sometimes as a Note of Attention, and then 'tis prefix'd before a Speech, and signifies the great weight and importance of what comes after it. In this sense 'tis the same with *Verily, Verily*, which we find often us'd in Scripture to usher in matters of great moment and necessity. Thus we find it frequently used by our Blessed Saviour, as *John 3. 5.* to convince *Nicodemus* of the Necessity of Baptism; and *John 16. 23.* to assure the Disciples of the Success of their Petitions; where *Verily, Verily*, in both Places is the same with *Amen, Amen*: which is a vehement Assertion of the Truth and Certainty of what he spake, and that 'tis to be believ'd and receiv'd accordingly. Again,

2. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Assent, and then 'tis affix'd to what went before, signifying our owning and assenting to it; and so *Amen* is the same with *so it is, or so it shall be*. In this sense 'tis added to this and all our other Prayers, to denote our hearty Assent to and Belief of them, that they are offer'd up in Truth and Sincerity, and that we expect a comfortable Issue and Return of them. The Apostle speaks of some Prayers, to which *they that occupy the room of the Unlearned cannot say Amen*, as when they are deliver'd in an unknown Tongue, as also when the Matter of them is unsound, and the Expressions uncertain and obscure; for which reason we are directed to pray with the Understanding, and that our

Words

Words should be few and well weigh'd, that all the People may say *Amen* to our giving of thanks.

3. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Consent, and signifies the Harmony and Agreement of the Petitioners, that they unite in their Requests, and join together in what they ask, saying with one Voice *Amen*, that *so it may be*: This is what the Apostle means, when he wills all Christians to *speak the same thing*, and *with one Mind and one Mouth to glorify God*. This is imply'd in the Use of this word here, and in our other Prayers, where 'tis order'd that *Amen* be said not by one or two only, but jointly by all the People, and particularly by every Member of the Congregation, to signify the Harmony and Agreement of their Devotions, which is to serve God *in the Beauty of Holiness*, even with one Heart and one Consent. And this will give the greater Strength and Efficacy to our Prayers; for if God hath promised to hear the Petitions of two or three meeting and agreeing together in his Name, how much more will he lend an ear to the joint Devotions of a pious Multitude, all agreeing and saying *Amen* to the same Petitions?

4. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Intention, and betokens not only the Harmony, but the Ardency and Intenseness of our Devotion; and so *Amen* is the same with *So be it*, or so we earnestly wish and pray *it may be*. In this sense likewise 'tis here understood, and hath a particular reference to each Petition, signifying the Zeal and Fervency of our Requests, that we are touch'd with a true Sense and an earnest Desire of what we ask. In our Petitions for God's Glory, it denotes our earnest Desire of promoting it; saying with the Psalmist, *Let the whole Earth be fill'd with his Glory, Amen and Amen*, Psal. 72. 19. In our Petitions for ourselves, it bespeaks the deep Sense we have of our Wants, and our hearty Longings to have them supply'd; and in both saying with the Psalmist, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, and let all the People say Amen*; Psal. 106. 48. And this was done with that Zeal and Fervency by the primitive Christians, that the sounding forth their *Amens* was (as St. *Jerom* tells us) like the Voice of Thunder, or the Sound of many Waters; and 'twere well if our *Amens* were more audible and unanimous, to shew that we heartily conspire together in our Requests, and are duly affected with what we ask. They that with-hold their *Amen* to the

the Prayers of the Church, or whisper it out too softly, betray a great Coldness and Unconcernedness in the Devotion, and deserve to have no share in the Benefit of it.

5. This Term is sometimes us'd as a Note of Assurance, and signifies the comfortable Hope of the Return of our Prayers: In this sense, *Amen* is the same with *So it will be*; by pronouncing whereof, we express our Faith in God, and a good Assurance of being heard in what is ask'd. *Amen* in the *Hebrew* signifies Truth and Faithfulness; and when we use it in our Prayers, it implies that we take God to be faithful, and that we rely upon him for the fulfilling his Promise in the Answer of our Prayers: hence *all the Promises are said to be in him Yea, and in him Amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. meaning that they are all undoubtedly true, and may be firmly rely'd upon. Yea, we find God styling himself, *The Amen, the faithful and true Witness*, Rev. 3. 14. And the closing our Prayers with it, shews that we take him for such, and depend upon him accordingly.

Lastly, This Term is us'd as a Note of Conclusion, and signifies the shutting up of our Requests, or the putting a period to our Prayers. Hence St. *Ferom* calls it *Signaculum Orationis*, the Seal of Prayer, because it at once confirms and concludes it, as a Seal assures and ends a Bargain. This Seal our Saviour here sets to his own Prayer, and hath directed us to do so to all others, shutting them up with this concluding Particle, *Amen*; to signify not only our unfeigned Assent to and Consent in all our Petitions, but likewise our stedfast Faith and Reliance upon God for the performance of them, for *he is faithful that hath promised*.

Thus I have given you the full Sense and Scope of this Term, *Amen*; which you see is a very pregnant Word, and contains in it many useful Lessons.

And so I have done with the Exposition of this Divine Form; which being so complete and comprehensive of all that is fit and needful for us to ask, ought to be the Standard and Model of all our Devotion; in which we must always add this perfect Prayer to our imperfect Petitions, to cover the Defects and procure the Acceptance of them, that asking in Christ's Words, as well as in Christ's Name, we may be the sooner heard for his Merits: And this we should not fail to do, since our blessed Saviour has left it in charge with us, and commanded us when we pray, to say, *Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.* Which excellent Form beginning and ending with God's Glory, teaches us in all

our Addressees to do likewise: and therefore to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Glory, Honour, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*



DISCOURSE XII.

PHIL. iv. 6. latter part.

In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.

THE next Question in the Catechism following the Lord's Prayer, is, *What desirest thou of God in this Prayer?* To which the Answer is, *I desire my Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness, to send his Grace unto me and all People, that I may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as I ought to do. And I pray unto God, that he will send us all things needful to our Souls and Bodies; and that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins: and that it will please him to save and defend us in all Dangers ghostly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our ghostly Enemy, and from everlasting Death. And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness; and therefore I say, Amen, so be it.* In which Question and Answer, we have a brief Summary of all things contain'd in the Lord's Prayer; of which I shall treat from these words: *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God.* Where we may observe,

First, The Object to whom our Prayers are to be directed, and that is, *to God*, saith our Text; *to the Lord God our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness*, saith the Catechism.

Secondly, The Matter of our Prayers, and that is, *Every thing*, saith the Text; which are more particularly enumerated and reckon'd up in the Catechism; as we shall see after.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Our Thankfulness, and Trust in God for the performance of them: *And this I trust, &c.* Of each of these I shall say briefly and distinctly. And I begin,

First, with the Object to whom our Prayers and Supplications are to be directed; and that is *unto God*, whom the Psalmist styles, *A God bearing Prayers, and therefore to him must all Flesh come*, Psal. 65. 2. The Catechism expresses him by *the Lord God, our heavenly Father, who is the Giver of all Goodness*. Where he is call'd *the Lord God*, to signify his Sovereignty and Authority over us: *Our heavenly Father*, to signify his Ability and Readiness to help us, which are far above that of earthly Parents to their children: *The Giver of all Goodness*, Jam. 1. 5, 17. to encourage us in all our Addresses to him, and to expect from him all that we can reasonably desire. From the Object, I proceed,

Secondly, To the subject Matter of our Prayers and Supplications; and that, our Text tells us, is *Every thing* that is necessary or fit for us to ask, or for him to give. Which the Catechism from the Lord's Prayer branches out in several Particulars: As,

1. *That he would send his Grace unto us, and to all People, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do.* Where by his Grace we are to understand that supernatural Aid and Strength he is pleased to promise and bestow upon our weak Endeavours to please him. Which Grace of his we pray him to send not to us only, but to all People; whereby we are taught not to confine our Prayers to ourselves, but to extend them to all our Christian Brethren; which Lesson we learn from the Preface to the Lord's Prayer. And this Grace we pray him to send,

(1.) *That we may worship him*; that is, that we may celebrate the Glory of his adorable Attributes, and Perfections, always thinking and speaking honourably of his Holy Name, and having a due Esteem and Veneration for all Persons and Things that are call'd by it: and this is imply'd in the first petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

(2.) *That we may serve him*; that is, that we may own him for our Lord and King, and may accordingly pay him the Homage and Service due to so great a Majesty; that so being Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace here, we may be prepar'd to be the Subjects of his Kingdom of Glory hereafter.

after. And this is imply'd in the second Petition, *Thy Kingdom come.*

Lastly, *That we may obey him, as we ought to do*; that is, that we may cheerfully perform his Will, and live in a constant Observance of his Laws; and all this in such a manner *as we ought*, that is, in a way suitable to his Nature, and agreeable to his Will: still setting before us the Pattern of the holy Angels in Heaven, and endeavouring as near as we may to conform ourselves to the great Example of those glorify'd Spirits. And this is imply'd in the third Petition, *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* And because we are utterly unable to do these things of ourselves, we are here taught to pray for *Grace* to be enabled to perform them.

2. We pray unto God, *That he would send us all things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies*; that is, that he will give us the Spiritual Food of the Word and Sacraments, for the Nourishment of our Souls, and likewise all manner of corporal Provisions, necessary for the Support and Sustenance of our Bodies, and thereby graciously supply the Wants of both. This is imply'd in the fourth Petition, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*: where having sought first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, we are directed to ask for those temporal Blessings which he hath promised to add to those that seek him. And of these we are to ask not such Abundance or Superfluity, as may supersede our Care, and make us, like the Rich Man in the Gospel who had Goods laid up for many years, abandon ourselves to Ease and Sloth; but to ask every day our daily Bread, that is, Bread sufficient for that day, that we may renew our Devotion, and petition the next day for what may suffice for that, and so every day preserve our Intercourse, and shew our Dependence upon our Maker. This was Agar's Prayer, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, but feed me with Food convenient for me*, Prov. 30. 8. And having Food and Rayment, with God's daily Blessings upon them, we may well enough learn therewith to be content.

3. Our Saviour has taught us farther to pray, *That God will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our Sins*; that is, that to the Mercies that concern this Life, which are but short and perishing, he would add the greater Mercies of Pardon and Forgiveness, that relate to our eternal Life in the World to come. The Sins we pray here to be forgiven

given, are all manner of Breaches or Transgressions of God's Laws, either by omitting what they require, or committing what they forbid; and that either more immediately against God, or more directly against our Neighbour. All which have Guilt enough in them to bind us over to the Penalty of eternal Damnation. Now the removing of this Guilt, by blotting out our Iniquities, and receiving us into Favour, as if we had never committed them, is the Mercy and Forgiveness we here beg at God's hands: And this is indeed the greatest of all Mercies, and that which alone can sweeten and give a relish to all other. Without this, no Temporal Blessing whatever can be of any use, or afford any Comfort to us; the Sense of Sin will imberber all, and where the Guilt of it cries against us, nothing but Misery and Vengeance can sound in our ears. But where this is forgiven, and the Cry of it silenced, there all things are serene and quiet, and nothing but the Voice of Joy and Gladness can be heard within us. This is the Mercy of Mercies, which our Saviour here sends us all upon our Knees to pray for, and the rather, because he hath purchas'd it for us, and by pleading his Merits we shall not fail to receive it. But still we must remember the Conditions upon which it is granted, *viz.* Confession and Repentance: for *he that covereth his Sins, shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find Mercy: Prov. 28. 13.*

All this is imply'd in the fifth Petition, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Where another Condition is supposed and annex'd to the obtaining of it, and that is the forgiving of others; for we ask *Forgiveness of our Trespases*, upon the same terms, and in the same measure *as we forgive them that trespass against us*: so that without forgiving others, we must not look for Forgiveness ourselves. He in the Gospel, who having *ten thousand Talents* remitted to him, took his Brother by the Throat *for a hundred Pence*, forfeited all title to Mercy, and was made to pay the utmost Farthing; *So likewise* (says our Saviour) *will your heavenly Father do to you, if ye forgive not one another their Trespases.*

4. We pray, *That God would save and defend us in all Dangers, ghostly and bodily.* The foregoing Petitions are prayers for the obtaining all manner of Good; the latter are applications for the averting all kind of Evil: in both which we are here taught to *make our Requests known unto God.*

This latter is contain'd in the sixth Petition, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* This the Catechism explains, by his *saving and defending us in all Dangers, ghostly and bodily*: That is, as the Church elsewhere teaches us to pray, (*Epiphany Sunday 4.*) That God who knoweth us to be set in the midst of so many and great Dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our Natures we cannot always stand upright, would grant us such Strength and Protection as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us thro' all Temptations. And likewise (*Lent Sunday 2.*) that he would keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls that we may be defended from all Adversities that may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts that may assault and hurt the Soul. The Sense of all which is, that God would either save us from Dangers, that they happen not to us, or support us under them if they light upon us; or give us a happy End or Issue out of them, when his Wisdom and Goodness shall think fit. To which end we pray, secondly to be kept from all Sin and Wickedness; the Cause of all our Troubles, the Root of all the Evils that befall us, and the Bane both of Soul and Body. To arm us against these we are bid to *watch and pray, that we enter not into Temptation*: for we walk in the midst of Snares, and our own Weakness is such, that they are apt too often to betray and prevail over us; and therefore we are to call in the Aid and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit to preserve or deliver us from them. Moreover,

We pray to be kept from our ghostly Enemy, that is, the Devil, who like a roaring Lion goes to and fro, seeking whom he may devour; 1 Pet. 5. 8. Satan is a restless, powerful, and subtle Adversary: He beguil'd our first Parents in a state of Innocence, and can more easily betray us in a state of Impotence, and much greater Weakness; and therefore we are to fortify ourselves against his Wiles, not only by our own Vigilance, but by imploring the Succours of Divine Grace, which will be sufficient to vanquish his Temptations and to deliver us from the Evil One.

Lastly, We pray to be deliver'd from Everlasting Death. This is the greatest of all Dangers, and that to which all Sin and Wickedness, together with all the Temptations of our ghostly Enemies, tend to and end in: 'tis the completion of Misery, and final destruction of Body and Soul for ever in Hell; and therefore this is above all to be pray'd against and by all possible ways to be prevented. And this can be

only done by adding to our Prayers the Exercises of a Holy Life, led in the Fear of God, and in Obedience to his Laws, which is the best Preservative from Everlasting Death, and the only Path that leads to Everlasting Life.

Thus we see both the Object and the Matter of our Prayers and Supplications, as they are prescrib'd to us by our Blessed Saviour.

To which our Text wills us to join,

Thirdly, Our Thanksgivings for Mercies receiv'd to render them successful: for Ingratitude stops the Current of the Divine Bounty, and nothing but a thankful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Favours, can open the way for future Blessings. And therefore St. Paul directs, That Prayers and Supplications, and giving of Thanks be made for us and for all Men, 1 Tim. 3. 1. And here in the Text, That in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, our Requests be made known unto God.

But what need we (may some say) *make our Requests known unto God*, who is perfectly acquainted with them already, and knows all our Necessities before we ask? For

Answer, This is to be done, not for Information, to tell any thing unto God which he knows not already, for he is privy to all our Wants and Desires long before, and *knows our Thoughts afar off*: but this is to be done by way of Confession and Acknowledgment of our own Inability to help ourselves, and of his infinite Power and Readiness to do more for us than we can ask or think.

Beside, God Almighty, who is the Author and Bestower of all Blessings, hath made our asking the Condition of receiving; *I will be sought unto* (says he) *for these things*: And our Saviour hath told us that we must *ask* before we can hope to receive.

But then St. James adds, That we must *ask in Faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavers is like a Wave of the Sea, driven with the Wind and tossed; and let not that Man think he shall receive any thing of the Lord; for such a doubting and double-minded Man is unstable in all his ways: James 1. 6, 7, 8.* So that we must shew our Dependence upon, and Affiance in God before he will hear or answer our Petitions.

This is held forth to us in these words of our Catechism; *And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness; and therefore I say, Amen, so be it.* Where we are taught two

weighty Lessons necessary to the Success of our Prayers.

1. To own all good Things to come intirely from the *Mercy and Goodness of God*. And,

2. To put our whole *Trust and Confidence* in him, for the obtaining of them.

1. I say, both the Text and Catechism teach us to own all good Things to come merely from the Mercy and Goodness of God; 'tis not from our own Merits, Industry, or any other Abilities, but wholly and solely from the Bounty of our Maker: *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift* (says St. James) *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*; Jam. 1. 17. Jacob acknowledged, that he was *not worthy of the least of all God's Mercies, or of all the Truth that he had shew'd unto his Servant*, Gen. 32. 10. And we may add, that we are not only unworthy of any of his Blessings, but that we deserve the forest of all his Punishments: *And because his Compassions fail not, therefore alone it is that we are not consum'd*; as the Church acknowledges in the *Lamentations*, Chap. 3. 22.

In short, all the good Things we enjoy, desire, or want, are to be ascrib'd wholly to the Goodness of God, and to be expected only from the Mercy of our Maker, and the Merits of our Saviour; such low and abasing Thoughts ought we to have of ourselves, and such high and magnifying Apprehensions are we to entertain of the Divine Bounty. And having wrought our Minds to a true sense of these things, we are,

Lastly, To put our whole Trust and Confidence in God for the obtaining of them. So the Catechism directs in these words; *And this I trust he will do of his Mercy and Goodness*. The Apostle wills us *to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need*, Heb. 4. 16. A dear Child comes with boldness to an indulgent Father for a Supply of all his Wants: And if earthly Parents know how to give good Gifts to their Children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask them? Their Compassions and Abilities are both infinitely less than his; and if they are so ready and willing to relieve the Necessities of their Children, we may rest assured that God, who is much more able, will likewise be far more willing to hear and relieve the Wants of his People that call upon him. Hence we are bid to draw nigh to him in full assurance of Faith, to address with Confidence, and to make a full and free discovery

every of our Wants and Requests to him, who never fail-
eth them that trust him. 'Tis but to perform our part in
doing what he hath commanded; and we may be assured
he will not fail of his, in performing what he hath prom-
is'd. Let us beware of having recourse to any unlawful
or indirect Means to obtain our Desires, but commit our-
selves unto God in well-doing; and he will bring all that
to pass, which may be necessary to our Comfort here, and
Happiness hereafter. All this is imply'd in the *Amen* add-
ed to this Prayer, which signifies a full Assent and Con-
sent to the Truth and Faithfulness, and also to the Power
and Readiness of God to grant what we ask of him. The
word is sometimes Optative, and translated, *So be it*; and
sometimes Declarative, and render'd, *So it shall be*: Both
which give us a good Assurance of a gracious Answer to our
Petitions.

And now what greater Incouragement can we have to
make our Requests known unto God, and to put our whole
Trust in him, who hath so well secur'd to us the Success of
our Petitions? More especially, Let us daily put up our
Requests to him in that Divine Form of Prayer which
Christ himself hath taught us, being the most perfect of all
Prayers. And let us add our hearty *Amen* to all things
contain'd in it, which as we have great reason to desire,
so have we good ground to believe will be granted to us;
and therefore, whenever it is rehears'd, *Let all the People*
say Amen.



A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
THIRD PART
OF THE
Church-Catechism :
CONTAINING
The DOCTRINE of the
HOLY SACRAMENTS.

1 Cor. 11. 24, 25. *This do in Remembrance of me.*

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.

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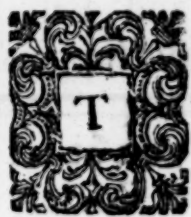
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To the Reverend

Dr. *G O D O L P H I N*,
Dean of St. *Paul's* and Provost of
Eaton, and the Worthy Fellows of that
Society, my Honoured Patron.

Reverend Sirs,



THE Remembrance of your former Favours, which I ought never to forget, hath prompted me to take this opportunity of a publick Acknowledgment; which tho small, yet being the best Return I can yet make, I hope will not miss of a candid Acceptance.

'Tis to your Kindness, that I owe both the Leisure and Ability of composing these Discourses; and therefore you may justly claim a Share in them: by which you may see how I have employ'd my Time, and improv'd my Talent in that Station wherein you were pleas'd to set me. And I cannot doubt, but as you have been a Patron to the Author, so you will be to the Work too; and then it will not fear the Censure or Assaults of any Adversaries.

Indeed,

Indeed, the Lovers of Innovation have labour'd hard to cast contempt on the *Church-Catechism*, and to set up their new-invented Models of Instruction against it.

But the Excellency and Usefulness, the Fullness, and withal the Conciseness of its Composition, hath baffled all Attempts of that kind, and rather increas'd than eclips'd its Glory

The Subject of this Part of the Catechism, is the Doctrine of the Holy Sacraments; as a Subject truly Great and Divine, containing the sublime Mysteries of our Religion, and the principal Tokens of that Respect and Remembrance which we owe to our Blessed Saviour, who was pleas'd to leave these as Legacies and Memorials of himself, to be continu'd in his Church to his Second Coming.

May all the Blessings of Heaven and Earth be multiply'd upon you, that you may support and adorn the two famous and flourishing Societies to which you belong; and may you at last be advanc'd to a much higher and nobler Society in Heaven, is the hearty Wish and Prayer of,

Reverend Sirs,

Your Obliged and Humble

Devoted Servant,

Matthew Hole.



T H E
P R E F A C E.

W H E N our Blessed Saviour had put an end to the numerous and costly Rites and Sacrifices of Moses's Law, which were all fulfill'd and completed in him, he instituted only two Sacraments to succeed in the room of them, viz. Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; the one as a Sacrament of Initiation, to enter us into the Church; the other as a Sacrament of Confirmation, to preserve and continue us in it. And tho the Legal Rites and Ceremonies, being only Shadows of good Things to come, vanish'd and were done away when the Substance came; yet these Gospel-Institutions, for their Excellence and perpetual Usefulness, are to last to the World's end.

The former for their Number and Cost, and likewise for the Frequency and Strictness of their Observation, were a Yoke too heavy for the Necks of us or our Forefathers to bear; whereas the latter, by the fewness and cheapness of their Administration,

Administration, hath render'd the Yoke of Christ easy, and his Burden light.

The Explication of these two Sacred Ordinances is the Subject of this last Part of the Catechism; which containing the highest Duties of Religion, and the sublimest Mysteries of Christianity, ought to be well known, consider'd and observ'd of all Christians.

To help them therein, the Readers will here find those Holy Mysteries in some measure unfolded to them; whereby the Ignorant may be instructed, the Negligent convinc'd and excited to the frequent use of them, and all of us better prepar'd for the worthy Receiving of them. Which things may serve to satisfy us of the Benefit and Comfort of the Means appointed for our Salvation, and to promote the Devotion of such as wait at God's Altar.

The attaining of these great and good Ends, is the whole Aim and Ambition of the Author.

Farewel.





A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION of the *Third Part of the Church-* Catechism.

DISCOURSE I.

I JOHN V. 6.

This is he that came by Water and Blood, even Jesus Christ; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood: And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth.



HAVING finish'd the three great Summaries of Faith, Obedience and Devotion, contain'd in the *Apostle's Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, and the *Lord's Prayer*, which make up the Second Part of the Church-Catechism; I proceed now to the

Third Part, which contains the Doctrine of the *Holy Sacraments*: Where the First Question is,

How many Sacraments hath Christ ordain'd in his Church?

To which the Answer is, *Two only as generally necessary to Salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.*

In treating whereof, 'twill be necessary to speak something,

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First,

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First, Of the Use and Benefit of the Holy Sacraments, and their general Necessity to Salvation. And,

Secondly, Of the Number of them ordain'd by Christ in his Church to that end; which I shall do from these words of the Apostle, *This is he that came by Water and Blood, &c.*

The Words relate to a very remarkable Passage in the History of our Blessed Saviour's Crucifixion; where we read, that when *one of the Soldiers with a Spear pierced his precious Side, there forthwith came out both Water and Blood,* John 19. 34. which the Fathers generally interpret as Signs and Emblems of the two Sacraments; the *Water* representing Baptism, and the *Blood* the Lord's Supper: both which were ordain'd by our Saviour in the Celebration of them. The Cruelty of the Soldiers did but inhance the Kindness of our Saviour, and the Instruments of his Death became the Means of procuring to us Eternal Life: The Spear that pierc'd his Sacred Side, open'd there a Fountain to purge away the Guilt of Sin, and all manner of Uncleaness; every part of the Tragedy acted on him, was to fulfil the Prophecies concerning him, and the whole History of his Sufferings serves to confirm our Faith in the Mystery of Man's Salvation.

But to come more closely to the Holy Sacraments, I must consider the Institution, Use and Benefit of them, all which are here suppos'd; and then proceed to the Number of them, which is here inquir'd after in the Catechism, and declar'd in the Text. And here I must begin,

1. With the Institution of the Holy Sacraments, which are here said to be ordain'd by Christ in his Church.

As for Baptism, that was requir'd of the Proselytes of old in the Jewish Church, who were receiv'd into Covenant by Baptism as well as Circumcision; the former whereof is still continued and injoin'd afresh in the Christian Church. *St. John the Baptist*, who was the Herald to proclaim our Saviour, and the Harbinger to prepare for his Reception, did it by calling all People to Repentance and Baptism. And we read of his *baptizing* great Multitudes that came to him *in Jordan, confessing their Sins.* After which, we find our Blessed Saviour giving a Commission to his Apostles, *to go teach and baptize all Nations;* which Commission they executed, by calling upon all Persons to *repent and be baptized;* which Ordinance is deriv'd down, and continues to this day.

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As for the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, we find that instituted likewise by our Blessed Saviour, who *in the Night in which he was betray'd*, took *Bread and brake it*, and gave it to his *Disciples*, saying, *Take eat, this is my Body which was broken for you*. Likewise, *After Supper he took the Cup*, and when he had blessed it, gave it to them, saying, *Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament, shed for the Remission of Sins: Do this in remembrance of me*. By which we plainly see the Truth of what our Catechism here affirms of these Sacraments, that they were ordain'd by Christ in his Church. Then,

2. For the Use and Benefit of these Holy Sacraments, we find them deriv'd down thro' all Ages of the Church, and us'd by all good Christians ever since, as the Signs and Seals of the New Covenant made between God and his People; the one being the Rite of Admission, or entring us into the Church; the other of Confirmation, to establish us in it, and to convey to us the Benefits and Privileges of it. For as in our Prayers we represent our Wants unto God, and beg the Supply of them; so in the Holy Sacraments God promises and seals to us the return of them, and assures us of the Grant and Performance of them: Insomuch, that Prayer is, as it were, the Wing that mounts our Souls to Heaven, whereas the Holy Sacraments bring down Heaven to us, and are as it were the Hands to reach out the Blessing, and set the Seal to it: by the one God hears from us, by the other we hear from him; and not only so, but handle, taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

But that which we are mainly to consider in this Question, is the Number of these Sacraments, *How many Christ hath ordain'd in his Church*: Which we are all concern'd to know, that we may neither take from, nor add to them; to which end, the Catechism here tells us *two only as generally necessary to Salvation, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord*.

And here we are to take notice of two Extremes or Errors to be avoided by us; the one is, of those that lessen, the other of those that increase the Number of the Sacraments.

Of the first sort, are those Sectaries and Enthusiasts that decry the Use of the Holy Sacraments, and lay aside one or both of them.

Of the other, are the Romanists, who have multiply'd their Number, and added to them.

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For the First, There are but too many risen up of late, who to the great Disturbance of the Church, and Dishonour of Christianity, decry the Use of the Holy Sacraments, and lay aside one or both of them: Hence some have derogated from the Honour and Use of Baptism, and ascrib'd no greater Virtue or Efficacy to it, than to any ordinary washing.

Others have detracted from the Honour of the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, and esteem'd it no better than an ordinary Meal; and both have despis'd them as useless and needless Institutions. I speak not now of those, who thro' Superstition or Profaneness neglect these Sacred Mysteries, of which there are but too many; but of those who thro' mistaken Opinion deny the Use and Benefit of them, and so lay them wholly aside, thinking themselves above these Carnal Ordinances, and that they sute nor the Spiritual State and Dispensation of the Gospel: by which means they shew no greater regard to the Holy Sacraments ordain'd by Christ in the Gospel, than to the antiquated Rites and Ceremonies of *Moses's* Law; and so take Baptism and the Lord's Supper to carry no better Force and Obligation than Circumcision and the Passover, tho our Saviour instituted the former, and order'd them to succeed in the room of the latter.

But for the better Satisfaction of both these, it will be requisite (as the Catechism directs) to shew the Necessity of the Holy Sacraments in order to Salvation; which shall be done in the next. In the mean time we are,

2. To consider the Addition made by the Church of *Rome* to the Number of these Sacraments: for tho the Gospel (as the Catechism suggests) mentions but *two only as generally necessary to Salvation*, represented in our Text by the *Water and Blood* that issued out of our Saviour's Side; yet they have multiply'd them into Seven, and to Baptism and the Lord's Supper have added Five more, viz. Confirmation, Orders, Matrimony, Penance, and Extreme Unction.

The Grounds and Reasons alledg'd for this Addition, are but slender and insufficient. As,

1. They alledge that the things added by them, are all Sacred, and by outward Signs import an inward and mysterious Signification. Thus, Confirmation, by the laying on of the Hands of the Bishop, implies the conveying of Grace to enable to the performance of the Baptismal Vow: Or-

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ders, by the same Ceremony, import the conferring of the Holy Ghost: Matrimony represents the Mystical Union between Christ and his Church: Penance, by some outward Acts, is a sign and help to Repentance; and Extreme Unction, administred by the Elders in the Name of the Lord, signifies and seals the Remission of Sins. And therefore all these are to be reckon'd in the Number of Sacraments.

But if this were a sufficient Reason, we might multiply and add to them many more: for an Oath, which by the laying on of Hands, and kissing the Book, signifies the invoking the Testimony of God; and all the Parables and Metaphors in the Gospel, which by outward Resemblances carry an inward and mysterious Signification, might upon the same account be reckon'd in that number: so that this inferring too much, must be a bad Argument. Again,

2. They alledge, that St. *Jerom* and other Fathers, frequently call these foremention'd Acts and Mysteries of Religion by the Name of *Sacraments*, and therefore they may be well enough so reputed.

But if that were enough to denominate them properly such, then might the Cross and many other things be added to and taken for Sacraments; for St. *Austin* styles the Cross by the name of *Sacramentum Crucis*, the Sacrament of the Cross. *Tertullian* calls the Helve wherewith *Elisba* recover'd the Ax out of the Water, *Sacramentum Ligni*, the Sacrament of Wood. St. *Jerom* styles Martyrdom a Sacrament; and an Oath both in Sacred and Civil Authors frequently passes under that Name: so that that, you see, would mightily swell and increase the Number of Sacraments. Moreover,

Lastly, Their observing something Sacred and Myste-
rious in the number Seven, as the *seven Angels*, the *seven Trumpets*, the *seven Vials*, and the like; and their enlarging the Sacraments upon such an account to that Number, is vain and frivolous: for there are other Numbers to which the Scriptures seem to ascribe as great, or greater Mystery. The number Three might be esteem'd Sacred upon the account of the Holy Trinity; the number Ten for the sake of the Ten Commandments, and the like: so that the ascribing any thing of Virtue or Mystery to any Number, is rather a piece of Superstition, than any solid Reason or Foundation for augmenting the Number of the Holy Sacraments.

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The truth of this matter is, that the Antients usually rendering the Greek word *μυστήριον*, by the Latin word *Sacramentum*, whereby every thing that carries with it some secret Meaning, or some sacred Representation, is by them term'd a Sacrament, has been the true Reason of multiplying the Number of the Sacraments, and occasion'd all the Disputes about it. So that to clear up this Matter, we may consider the word Sacrament.

1. In its largest Extent and Signification, for every thing that is sacred, or is apply'd to holy Uses, or set to represent any holy Thing; in which sense all the Mysteries of Religion, and all outward Signs that belong to or set forth Divine things, are call'd Sacraments: But if we take the word,

2. In a more strict and proper sense, for those Sacred Rites instituted by Christ, as the necessary Means and Pledges of Salvation appertaining to all Christians; so we shall find Baptism and the Lord's Supper the two only Sacraments ordain'd by our Saviour to that end.

Now to this strict and proper Notion of a Sacrament, two things are here mention'd as requisite; the

One, that it be a thing necessary to Salvation; the

Other, that it be generally necessary to all Persons for that end.

Now both these concur in the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, being both instituted of Christ, as the necessary means of Salvation; the one to be the Sacrament of Initiation, to receive us into the Church, and intitle us to the Privileges of it; the other to be the Sacrament of Confirmation, to keep and preserve us in it, and to convey to us the Benefits of it.

And as these are necessary to Salvation, so are they generally so to all Persons, none finding Admission into Heaven, but by the Door of Baptism; nor are any cherish'd to eternal Life, but by the spiritual Repast of the Lord's Supper, as will be more fully shew'd hereafter. This is more than can be affirm'd of those other things adopted by the Church of *Rome* into the number of Sacraments; for neither Orders, Matrimony, Penance, nor Extreme Unction, are things necessary to Salvation, and much less are they generally so to all Persons, since many are and will be sav'd without them. They are indeed very useful and convenient things for some Persons, and in some Cases, for the promoting of Good and preventing of Evil; and so in a large sense may

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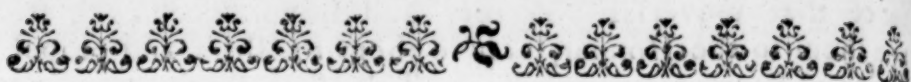
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be styl'd Sacred Things and Holy Mysteries; but they are not of that universal Necessity and Importance, as to intitle them to the Honour, or give them the strict and proper Notion of Sacraments, which must be something necessary and requir'd of all Persons in order to their Salvation. Upon the whole then, this being a Dispute chiefly about Words, that have doubtful and different Significations, may perhaps be reckon'd in the number of those curious and idle Questions which the Apostle would have Christians avoid, as engendring Strife; which they that affect, dote about Questions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmises, and perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt Minds: 1 Tim. 6. 4, &c. 2 Tim. 2. 23. And therefore it will concern us more to apply ourselves to the Knowledge and Use of these holy Sacraments, than to differ and contend about the Number of them, that we may feel the Efficacy, and reap the Benefits consign'd and convey'd by them.

To conclude this Point, it favours not a little of the antient Piety, to retain the two antient Sacraments of the New Testament, *Baptism and the Supper of the Lord* both; which were shadow'd out by the *Water and Blood*, which flow'd from our Saviour's Side, as he hang'd on the Cross: which the Fathers tell us, proceeded not from any natural Cause, but contain'd something miraculous and mysterious; signifying to us, that as Sin enter'd into the World by the Woman which came from *Adam's* Side, so Salvation came in by the Water and Blood that issued forth from the Side of our Saviour, which they therefore generally apply to the two Sacraments. *He came not by Water only*, to signify that Baptism alone is not sufficient, nor may we singly rely upon it; *but by Water and Blood*, to signify that as his Blood was necessary to the purging away Sin, so our receiving of it is necessary to intitle us to the Pardon purchas'd by it. To attest which, the Spirit is here brought in as a *Witness, which is the Spirit of Truth*. This Spirit descended upon our Saviour in the Form of a Dove at his Baptism, and came down in the Form of a Comforter at his Crucifixion, to confirm our Faith in both. And as we hereby learn the Original of the Two Sacraments, so ought we to keep to them, without adding to or detracting from them.



DISCOURSE II.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jesus answer'd, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

IN the first Question of the Catechism, touching the Doctrine of the Sacraments, I observ'd these three things;

1. The Institution and Use of the Holy Sacraments, which are said to be *ordain'd by Christ in his Church.*
2. The Number of them, which are here declar'd to be *two only, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of our Lord.*
3. The *general Necessity of them to Salvation*: for so they are here said to be unto all Persons.

The two first were handled in the last Exercise; wherein I shew'd the express Precepts of Christ, ordaining these for the Use of his Church, and the little reason of adding and multiplying more. I proceed now to the

Third, which shews us the general Necessity of these two Sacraments, in order to the Salvation of Mankind. To evince which, I shall begin,

First, with the Sacrament of Baptism, the Necessity whereof is here plainly set forth by our Blessed Saviour: *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* The words are part of a Conference held between *Nicodemus*, a Ruler of the Jews, and our Blessed Saviour. The Fame of Christ's Doctrine and Miracles had brought him to him for Satisfaction. He came by night for fear of the Jews; and being come, told our Saviour, that he took him for *a Teacher come from God, for none could do these Miracles which he did, except God were with him*, ver. 2. Our Saviour lik'd his Confession, but withal told him, that that of itself was not sufficient, but he must *be born again before he could see the Kingdom of God*, ver. 3. *Nicodemus* startled at this, asks the Question, *How a Man can be born again*

again when he is old, or enter the second time into his Mother's Womb, and be born? To which our Saviour replies in the Words of the Text, *Verily, Verily I say unto thee, except a Man be born again of Water, &c.* meaning that he spake not of a natural, but spiritual Regeneration. The word *Verily, Verily*, betokens not only the certain Truth, but the exceeding great Weight and Importance of what comes after it; and the following Words bespeak no less the indispensable Necessity of it: *Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, &c.*

To be *born again* supposes a former Birth, and that is our first coming into the World; in which we were born dead in Trespasses and Sins, the Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Damnation; whereas to be born again, is our being receiv'd into the Church, by which we are recover'd from that spiritual Death to a new Life, and thereby made the Children of God, and Heirs of his heavenly Kingdom.

To be *born again of Water*, can be meant only of our being baptiz'd, which is the only New Birth we are capable of by that Element: and the washing away the Guilt of Sin, represented in that Sacrament by the outward Washing of Water, is in Scripture often styl'd a *New Birth*, or being *born again to a lively Hope*. 'Tis so styl'd, because the plunging of the Body under Water, us'd in the beginning of Christianity, signify'd our being dead and bury'd with Christ in Baptism; so the rising out of it betoken'd the reviving again, and rising to a newness of Life. This admitting Profelytes by washing, was us'd likewise among the Jews; and he that was so admitted, was said to be *recens natus*, new born: which washing is by the Apostle call'd the *Laver of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. And they that are so receiv'd into the Church, are said to be *born a-new of Water*.

To be *born again of Water and the Spirit*, signifies the Communication of that Spirit of Christ, in some measure, that descended on the Apostles, and thereby deriving spiritual Life and Strength to the baptiz'd Party. For as in the first Creation, the Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of the Waters, and thereby quicken'd the rude indigested matter of the World into an orderly and beautiful Frame; even so in the New Creation or Regeneration of a Christian, the Spirit of Christ moveth upon the Waters of Baptism, and thereby gives a new and spiritual Life, bringing Light out of Darkness, and Order out of Confusion.

And as the Angels stirr'd the Waters in the Pool of *Bethesda*, before they became healing and medicinal to the Body; so the Spirit's moving and acting upon the Waters of Baptism, makes them salutary and healthful to the Soul. This is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, that was added by our Saviour to *John's* Baptism by Water: *I indeed baptize you with Water* (saith he) *but there cometh one after me, that is mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire.* And this he did first in that plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles and others on the Day of Pentecost; and this he still continues to do, by giving his Holy Spirit in some measure to all Christians at their Reception into the Church. This is the reason that Water and the Spirit are so often mention'd together in Scripture, because they go together in Baptism: our Saviour here joins them in our Text, and the Apostle in his Epistle to *Titus* hath put together the *Washing of Regeneration*, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, the two memorable Acts of Baptism, in which the former receives all its Efficacy and Virtue from the latter.

By *entring into the Kingdom of God*, we are to understand here our Admission into Christ's Church, which is his Kingdom of Grace, in order to our future Entrance and Reception into his Kingdom of Glory. And lastly,

Our Saviour's Saying, *Except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, plainly shews, that we must be admitted into the former, before we can have any hopes of Entrance and Admission into the latter.

And because Baptism is the Door that leads to both, here is evidently held forth the Necessity of that Sacrament in order to our Salvation; which Lesson we are likewise taught in sundry other places of the New Testament. The Apostles exhorted all their Converts to *be baptiz'd in the Name of our Lord Jesus*, that they might receive Salvation from him, as we read at large in the *Acts of the Apostles*. St. Paul tells us, *That Christ loved his Church, and deliver'd himself for it, that he might sanctify it, purging it with the washing of Water*, Eph. 5. 26. meaning, that Baptism purgeth away the Guilt and Defilement of sin, without which they both lie upon us, and leave us in the *Gall of Bitterness*, and the *Bond of Iniquity*. And such (saith he to the *Corinthians*) *were some of you*, till ye were wash'd in the Waters of Baptism, *justify'd in the Name of the Lord*, and

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Sanctify'd by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Which great Blessings are first and chiefly deriv'd and bestow'd on us in our Baptism; and therefore St. Peter tells us, that Baptism doth now save us, not so much by the outward washing away the Filth of the Flesh, as by the inward purifying of the Heart, and the Answer of a good Conscience; 1 Pet. 3. 21. And elsewhere we read, that not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but by his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration and Renewing of the Holy Ghost; Tit. 3. 5, 6. which words plainly set forth not only the Benefits, but Necessity of Baptism; without which, our Saviour here tells us, that we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, either his Kingdom of Grace here, or Glory hereafter: both which are entail'd only on his Disciples, who by Faith and Baptism follow him in the Regeneration, as we read, Mat. 19. 28. and elsewhere, He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned, Mark 16. 16.

But here it may be ask'd, If Baptism be so necessary to Salvation, what then will become of those that die unbaptiz'd; the Number of which, by reason of the Negligence of some, and the Ignorance of others, is not a few? And must all these be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven?

In answer to this, I say,

1. That tho Baptism is necessary to Salvation, yet we may not affirm it to be so absolutely and indispensibly necessary to that end, as that without it 'tis utterly impossible to be saved. For tho God hath appointed this and other Ordinances in his Church, to convey Mercy and Blessings to us, yet he hath not so far ty'd up himself to them, as not to be able to save without them. His Power is infinite, and his Mercy is over all his Works: He preserv'd the Bodies of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness without the Staff of Bread, the common Support of them; and sav'd their Souls without the Sacrament of Circumcision, the Seal of the Covenant to that end: which shews that he is not so confin'd to Means, but that he can and does sometimes save as well without as with them, tho they are of his own appointing. But yet,

2. We must distinguish between the ordinary Methods of Divine Providence, and Cases extraordinary: The former are to be the Rule and Direction of our Duty, tho the latter may not be always despair'd of or depended upon.

on. It would be a vain Presumption for any to refuse his daily Bread, because God can and hath supported some without it; neither would the Folly and Danger be less to neglect the Waters of Baptism, because God is able to save as well without as with them. Again,

3. We must distinguish between an unavoidable or involuntary Omission of Baptism, and a wilful Neglect or Contempt of it: the former may consist well enough with Salvation, tho the latter cannot.

There may be some Times and Cases when Baptism may not be had, in which cases the Desire of Baptism may qualify for Mercy, and be sufficient to Salvation, where there is no Opportunity: but where this Ordinance is administer'd, and Men are call'd upon to come to it, if they thro' Carelessness, Error, or Obstinacy allow themselves in the Neglect of it, there the Case is extremely sad and dangerous; for Baptism being the Gate of Entrance into the Church, out of which ordinarily there is no Salvation, They that enter not by it, can have no Right to the Mercies and Privileges of the Covenant, and consequently can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. By which we see the general Necessity of this Sacrament, and the Danger of despising it, where it may be had.

But whence doth this Necessity of Baptism proceed, or upon what is it grounded? Why,

(1.) This proceeds from the express Precept and Command of Christ, which the Schools call *Necessitas Precepti*, or a Necessity arising not so much from the Nature of the thing, as by virtue of a Divine Precept that calls all Christians to it. The Commission given to the Apostles, and in them to all the succeeding Ministers of the Gospel, was to go teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c. signifying, that Disciples are to be receiv'd into the Church by the Waters of Baptism. Accordingly we find all the Profelytes and Converts to Christianity, mention'd in the *Acts of the Apostles*, were admitted into it by this Ceremony: *Repent and be baptiz'd* (saith St. Peter to the three thousand Converts) *Acts 2. 38. Arise, why tarriest thou? and be baptiz'd* (saith Ananias to Saul upon his Conversion to Christianity) *Acts 22. 16. Lydia and her House was admitted into the Church this way, and so was the Jailor and his Family, and so have all Christians been ever since.*

(2.) But beside this Necessity proceeding from the Divine Precept, Baptism is farther necessary, *Necessitate Medii*,
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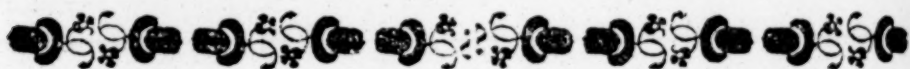
as a necessary means of the Remission of Sin, and renewing our Natures, both which are confer'd upon us, and convey'd to us by the Waters of Baptism: By this we are said to be born again, and receive the Principle of a new Life, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, and thereby enabled to fulfil the Conditions of the New Covenant. The first Christians receiv'd the Holy Ghost at their Baptism in its miraculous Gifts and Powers, for the Confirmation and Propagation of the Gospel; and tho' those extraordinary Gifts are now ceas'd with the Reason of them, yet we still receive in our Baptism the ordinary Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, that help to remove the Guilt of Original Sin, to heal the Corruption of our Natures, and to work in us that Faith and Repentance, which if we put not a Bar and Impediment to it ourselves, will be effectual to our Salvation. And tho' these blessed Effects of Baptism do not presently appear in Infants, no more than the Power of Reasoning, and other Acts of the rational Soul, which by reason of the Tenderneſs of their Age they are incapable of shewing: yet having the Root and Seeds of them planted in them by the Influence of the Holy Spirit, they after spring forth in the Fruits of a new and spiritual Life, which at last grow up and lead to Life everlasting. And this is that being born again of Water and the Spirit, which our Saviour here makes necessary to our Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. From this Discourse we may infer,

1st, The Extreme Danger of neglecting or denying the Use of Baptism: For if Christ has made this necessary to Salvation, and appointed it as the Door of Entrance into his heavenly Kingdom, what unspeakable Folly and Madness is it to deprive our Relations of this Benefit, and to shut as it were the Gate of Heaven against them! Sure they must be hard-hearted Parents, who bring Children into the Miseries of this World, without taking care to preserve them from the greater Miseries of the next, and suffer them to perish for want of the Waters of Baptism, where they may be so freely and so easily had. And who that tenders the Welfare of Children, would wilfully omit the Means of procuring to them so great Good, and preserving them from so much Evil? Methinks if there were nothing but the constant Practice of the Catholick Church, and the Custom of the Country where we live, we should be ashamed to neglect this Sacred Rite; but being the Command of our Saviour,

Saviour, and the Condition of our Salvation, we should be more than ordinarily afraid to omit it.

2dly, We may infer hence the Danger not only of denying, but deferring this Holy Sacrament: Delays we say are dangerous, but they are in nothing more so, than in the weighty Matters of Salvation. To delay Baptism, is to expose ourselves and Relations to the greatest of Hazards; for if there be no Entrance into the Kingdom of God, without being born again of Water and the Spirit, how unsafe is it to defer this new Birth, and to put off our being born again till we are old? We all know the Uncertainty of human Life, and the many Casualties we are daily and hourly subject to; and why then should we leave Salvation to so great a Hazard, and so lightly incur the Peril of Damnation?

Wherefore lastly, Let us all beware of denying or delaying this Holy Ordinance, which being the Entrance into the Church, and the Gate of Heaven, let us come to it for Admission into both.



DISCOURSE III.

JOHN vi. 53.

Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, there is no Life in you.

I Shew'd in my last the Necessity of the first Sacrament of Baptism, in order to Salvation, from that express Affelevation of our Blessed Saviour, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except a Man be born again of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*: I come now to shew the same of that other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, from the like express Assertion of Christ himself in these Words; *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, there is no Life in you.*

1st, By eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man, we are to understand the receiving that Holy Sacrament

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crament of the Eucharist, which was instituted for the Commemoration of both: For tho the Word of God be sometimes styl'd the Food of the Soul, and the digesting of Christ's Doctrine, may in a large and improper sense be express'd by eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood; yet I take it here more especially to relate to that part of it which concerns the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour: and so the eating of his Flesh and drinking his Blood will more properly refer to the partaking of those sacred Elements which represent the Body and Blood of Christ, and convey to us the Benefits procur'd by them. Again,

2dly, This eating of Christ's Flesh, and drinking his Blood, must not be taken in a carnal and cannibal Sense, as if we literally eat the very natural Substance of Christ's Body and Blood; for Christ's Body being but one, and in Heaven too, cannot possibly be in sundry Places at once, and much less be devour'd by sundry Persons at the same time.

3dly, Therefore this Expression must be understood in a spiritual and figurative sense; for the Flesh and Blood of Christ are here set to signify the better Sufferings he underwent in both, and our eating and drinking of them is the applying of them to ourselves, for the Benefit and Comfort of our Souls: so that when we firmly believe Christ's Death and Passion, and thankfully receive those Elements that are appointed to represent them, then are we in a spiritual sense said to feed upon Christ, and to eat his Flesh and Blood for the Nourishment of our Souls. For as the Sign is often put for the thing signify'd, so Bread and Wine in this Sacrament are put for the Body and Blood of Christ represented by them; and when we outwardly take and eat the one, we are said inwardly to receive and feed on the other.

But what is that Life that is convey'd by this spiritual Food? for we are told in the next Verse, that *he that eateth his Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, hath Life in him*; and our Text declares, that without this *there is no Life in us*.

In answer to this, by Life here we are to understand,

1. A spiritual Life of Grace here; and,
2. An eternal Life of Glory hereafter: Both which are cherish'd and confirm'd by this Holy Sacrament.

1. I say, there is a spiritual Life of Grace to be led here; and this (as I before observ'd) is begun in Baptism, when the Spirit moving in and upon those Waters, infuses his
Grace

Grace into us, and renders it the Laver of Regeneration. By this means we enter upon a new State, and receive a Principle of a new Life, for the healing our Nature, and quickening us to every good Word and Work; then it is that old things pass away, and all things become new: we gain new Relations, being the adopted Sons of God, and thereby enabled to cry, *Abba, Father*. Jesus Christ becomes our elder Brother, and we nearly ally'd to all the Saints both in Heaven and Earth. In short, by this spiritual Life here, we understand an inward vital Principle of Grace, wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, whereby 'tis quicken'd and enabled to walk on in the ways of God: *You hath he quicken'd* (saith the Apostle) *who were dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. 2. 5. And ver. 10. *We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath ordain'd, that we should walk in them*.

And as this vital Principle is first begun and planted in us by the Sacrament of Baptism, so is it preserv'd and cherish'd in us by this other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which is a standing Ordinance in Christ's Church for the continuing, confirming, and encreasing Grace in the Members of it: *The Life that I now live* (saith St. Paul) *I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*; Gal. 2. 20. As our natural Life is in the Blood, and our Bodies are supported by the Continual Supplies we have of it from our daily Food, so our spiritual Life consists in the Blood of Christ, and our Souls are preserv'd by the Supplies of Grace we derive from it. But beside this spiritual Life of Grace here, there is

2. An eternal Life of Glory hereafter: And this consists in the Maturity and Perfection of the former. For as Grace differs from Glory not in Kind, but only in Degree; so a Life of Grace begun here, when 'tis completed and consummated in Heaven, becomes a Life of Glory. Holiness in its Perfection is Happiness, and Grace refin'd from the Corruptions and Imperfections of this present State is Glory; they differ only as a Child does from a Man: for Grace is the Infancy and Minority of Glory, and Glory is the Manhood and Maturity of Grace. So that a Life led here in the Love and Practice of those Christian Virtues that rectify and ennoble our Natures, will hereafter ripen and advance into a Life of Glory, which consists in a more perfect and eternal Exercise of them.

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Now as Baptism is that sacred Ordinance by which we are born again, and begotten to this lively Hope; so is the Lord's Supper that Holy Sacrament by which these Seeds of Grace are cherish'd in us, and grow up unto eternal Life. This our Blessed Saviour insists upon, and proves at large in this Chapter; wherein he compares the Bread that he gave them, with that which *Moses* gave the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, withal shewing how much the one excell'd the other: *Your Fathers* (saith he) *did eat Manna in the Wilderness, and are dead*: That was not sufficient to preserve a natural, and much less to procure eternal Life; but *the Bread* (saith he) *that I give, cometh down from Heaven, of which if a Man eat, he shall not die*. And then for their Satisfaction adds, *I am that living Bread which came down from Heaven, if any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever*, ver. 49, 50, 51. His Flesh preserves from Corruption, and his Blood is a Portion of Immortality; by partaking of which, we are fed and nourish'd to eternal Life: for which reason he justly styles it Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, and wills us, *not to labour for the Meat that perisheth, but for this that endureth to everlasting Life*.

And this will lead me more particularly to consider the Necessity of this Sacrament in order to Salvation; which is here expressly set forth: *Except ye eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, there is no Life in you*; that is, there is no spiritual Life of Grace here, nor any Hopes of an eternal Life of Glory in the World to come. For as the natural Life of the Body is supported by the Staff of Bread, without which it must necessarily decay and fall to the ground; so the spiritual Life of the Soul is maintain'd by the living Bread reach'd out in this Sacrament, which if withheld, it must pine, and starve, and die away.

Now the Necessity of this Sacrament proceeds chiefly from the express command of our Blessed Saviour, who has requir'd and expects it from us: He who purchas'd Life and Salvation for us, may justly prescribe the Terms and Condition of his bestowing it; and consequently, he having made this the Condition of his conferring Life, we stand indispensably oblig'd for our own Welfare to observe it. *Do this in Remembrance of me*, was our Saviour's Precept at the Institution of this Sacrament, which he design'd for a Memorial of himself; where he lays a strict Charge upon all his Followers, if they will partake of the Benefits of his Death, to partake of those Symbols that are appointed

to represent it. Now there are many Considerations in this Precept to enforce its Obligation upon us. As,

1. If we consider Christ as our Lord and Master, his Authority over us may challenge Duty and Obedience from us. The Centurion in the Gospel declares, that when he bid any of his Servants go or come, or do this, they immediately did it; and shall Christ's Servants turn their backs, when he calls them to come to him? and when he bids them do this in remembrance of him, will any turn a deaf ear, and wilfully neglect it? Shall ordinary Servants pay a greater Regard to their earthly Masters, than Christ's Servants do to their Master in Heaven? Let this be far from them! nor let us give him cause to upbraid us, as he did some of old, *Ye call me Lord and Master, and do not the thing that I command you.*

2. If we consider Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, common Gratitude may enforce this Obligation, and teach us to do this in Remembrance of him, who thought nothing too much to be done and suffer'd for us. He hath restor'd us from Death to Life, by *laying down his own Life for us*, and redeem'd us from the Captivity of Slaves into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God; and that *not with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the Price of his own precious Blood.* And is not this enough for ever to engage us to remember him?

3. The Easiness of this Command may farther satisfy us not only in the Equity, but Necessity of observing it. All that Christ suffer'd, we should have undergone in our own Persons to Eternity; and yet all the requital he expects is only to remember him, and that too at a Divine Banquet or Entertainment at his own Table: And can we forget him, who hath so kindly remember'd us? He requires us to pledge him not in his bitter Cup, but in the Cup of Salvation, and to drink the Health of our Souls in the Blood of a crucify'd Saviour; and shall we think this an unreasonable or unnecessary Task? Methinks, what was said to *Naaman* in another case, is very applicable to this; *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee to do some great thing to be rid of the Leprosy, wouldst thou not have done it? How much more then, when he saith only, Wash and be clean?* 2 Kings 5. 13. In like manner, if our Saviour had exacted some severe and difficult thing from us, the Sense of his unparallel'd Love might very well oblige us to do it; how much more then, when he only bids us to eat and drink at his

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4. The necessity our Souls stand in of this Divine Food, may abundantly convince us of our necessity to receive it; for this is *that Bread that came down from Heaven*, and can alone nourish and cherish them to eternal Life. The Wants of the Soul are spiritual, and cannot be supply'd by any earthly or common Bread: this indeed may support our Bodies, but our Souls require more divine and heavenly Food; 'tis the Body and Blood of Christ receiv'd by Faith in this Sacrament, that is the proper Food and Nourishment of this spiritual part: for hereby the Pardon of Sin, and all other Benefits of Christ's Passion, which alone can make it happy, are convey'd and consign'd to us.

Lastly, 'Tis by eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of God, that we become vitally united to him; and therefore without this there can be no Life in us: for as our natural Life consists in the Union of the Soul and Body, which is preserv'd by our daily Food, so our spiritual Life consists in our Union with Christ, which is maintain'd by this spiritual Nourishment. This is set forth by various resemblances in Holy Scripture, where he sometimes compares himself to a Vine, and his Followers to the Branches; John 15. *I am the Vine* (saith he) *and ye are the Branches*. As the Branches live in the Vine, by deriving Sap and Nourishment from it, so all true Christians live in, and by Christ, by receiving Grace and spiritual Strength from him: And as the Branches cannot live or bear fruit, except they abide in the Vine, no more can we except we abide in him. *He that abideth in me* (saith our Saviour) *the same bringeth forth much Fruit, but without me ye can do nothing: If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch that is cut off and withered, and Men gather it, and cast it into the fire*. Now 'tis by eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ, that we are thus ingrafted and united to him; hereby he becomes one with us, and we with him, and so receive constant Supplies of Grace and spiritual Nourishment from him: whereas by withdrawing from the Communion of his Body and Blood, we cut off ourselves, we cast away the Bread of Life, and refuse that spiritual Food which is alone able to sustain us.

Again, to illustrate this Truth farther to us, our Saviour often styles himself the Head, and us his Members: and as

the Members cannot live without being united to the Head, no more can we, except we are united to Christ. Now 'tis by receiving his Body and Blood in this Sacrament, that we become thus united to him; and 'tis by that alone we derive that spiritual Strength from him, by which our Life is maintain'd. All which plainly shew the necessity of this Holy Sacrament, and how truly our Saviour affirms, that *except we eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, there is no Life in us:*

To conclude then, if we desire to live a Life of Grace here, or ever hope for a Life of Glory hereafter, we must frequently receive this spiritual Food, and preserve our Union with Christ, by keeping this Communion with him: so shall we, who now feed on him by Faith in this Sacrament, ere long feast with him for ever in his heavenly Kingdom.



DISCOURSE IV.

MAT. xxviii. 19.

Goye therefore and teach all Nations, &c.

THE Church having in the first Question and Answer taught the Catechumen the Number and Necessity of the Holy Sacraments, which are proper but two, and both generally necessary to Salvation; it proceeds, in

The next Question and Answer, to instruct him in the Nature of a Sacrament, to teach him what it is: where according to Christ's Commission to his Apostles, of *teaching all Nations*, it instructs him in all the weighty Matters of Religion, and especially in the Doctrine of the Sacraments which are the principal Badges of our Christianity, and the Instruments to convey Grace and Salvation to us. This Commission is here given with respect to *Nations*, Gentiles as well as Jews; which shews that *God is no Respector of Persons, but in all Nations he that fears him and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him.* Indeed under the Old Testament this great Privilege was con-

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fin'd only to the Jewish Nation, to whom appertain'd the Adoption, the giving of the Law, the Covenant, and the Promises. They were allow'd to hear the Law, and to teach their Children, whereas the whole Race of the Gentiles were excluded from the Instructions and Privileges of the Temple. *In Jewry was God known* (saith the Psalmist) *and his Name was great in Israel. At Salem was his Tabernacle, and his Dwelling-place in Zion: He gave his Statutes unto Jacob, and his Ordinances unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation, neither have the Heathen the knowledge of his Laws.* But Christ has in the Gospel enlarg'd this Commission, and will'd his Apostles to go and teach all Nations; so that now there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Bond or Free, Male or Female, but they are all one in Christ Jesus: that is, all are to be receiv'd into his Church, and to be admitted to the Benefits and Instructions of it.

Accordingly therefore our Church instructs all Children of believing Parents in the Knowledge of all Divine Truths, and particularly of the Nature, End, and Usefulness of the Holy Sacraments; to which end it asks in the next words, *What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?* To which the Child is taught to answer,

I mean an outward visible Sign of an inward spiritual Grace, given unto us, ordain'd by Christ himself, as a Means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof. Where several things are declar'd necessary to constitute a Sacrament: As,

1. There must be an outward and visible Sign.
2. An inward and spiritual Grace represented by it.
3. It must be given or apply'd to us.
4. It must be ordain'd by Christ himself.
5. It must be ordain'd as a Means to convey Grace.
6. It must be ordain'd as a Pledge or Earnest to assure us thereof.

All which being necessary to be known for the right understanding of the Nature and Notion of a Sacrament, must be particularly handled.

1. I say, there is requir'd an outward and visible Sign: for a Sacrament being design'd to bring or keep something in remembrance, there must be some outward Sign to represent it; and being a way of teaching by the Eye, as Preaching is by the Ear, the Sign must be visible, that it may be the better able to effect it. A thing that we see, is much

more apt to work upon us, than what we hear; and an Object presented to our view, leaves deeper Impressions, than what we only receive from the Report of others. "Hence we find that the Picture or Image of a thing doth affect us more than any historical Narration; and the more lively and express the Image is, the more lively Motions doth it stir up within us." For this reason we find God Almighty instructing his People under the Old Testament by visible Signs and Tokens, the better to impress the spiritual Notions upon their Minds by sensible Representations of them. Thus the Sacrament of Circumcision had an outward Sign in the Flesh, to keep it in remembrance; and the Passover had the Paschal Lamb to make it a Feast of Memorials. In like manner our Blessed Saviour instructed his People under the Gospel by visible Signs and Representations; and in the two Sacraments, substituted by him in the room of the former, appointed some outward Symbols in the Celebration of them, *viz.* Water in the one, and Wine in the other; as we shall see more at large hereafter. So that a Sacrament being intended to instruct by the Eye, requires an outward visible Sign to affect it.

2. To a Sacrament is requir'd an inward and spiritual Grace, without which the outward Sign were but frivolous and insignificant; for if it represented nothing, or as good as nothing, if no Spiritual Grace or good Thing were couch'd or contain'd under it, it would be of no use, and not worthy to be retain'd in the Church: whereas the Sacraments being Sacred Rites and Institutions necessary to Salvation, must represent and contain under them some spiritual Grace, that may be helpful to that End.

Thus in the first Sacrament of Circumcision, beside the outward Sign in the Flesh, there was an inward spiritual Grace signify'd by it, to wit, their being in Covenant with God, and becoming his People, as we read, *Gen. 17. 11.* In that other legal Sacrament of the Passover, beside the Paschal Lamb, which was the outward visible Sign, there was represented under it the Lamb of God, that was slain to take away the Sins of the World, which was the inward spiritual Grace. In like manner, in the Sacraments of the New Testament, the outward washing the Body by Water in Baptism, is a sign of the inward washing the Soul from the natural Filth and Pollution of Sin: and our eating and drinking the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper, signifies our spiritual feeding on Christ for Eternal Life. So that

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both these have their outward visible Signs to represent an inward spiritual Grace, and so have the two first Requisites of a Sacrament.

3. 'Tis farther requir'd to a Sacrament, that it be *given to us*; that is, that it be duly administred and apply'd to us. To the due Administration of it, 'tis necessary that it be done by proper Officers, that is, by Persons duly qualify'd and authoriz'd thereunto; without which, 'tis utterly void and of none effect: and therefore all Baptizing by Women or Persons that have no Commission, is no better than ordinary Bathing; and the Lord's Supper, when administred by such, is no better than a common Meal. Again, to make these effectual, they must be duly apply'd, as well as administred to us; for as the best Medicine is of no use, unless it be apply'd, so neither can a Sacrament be of any avail without a right Use and Application of it.

4. 'Tis necessary to a Sacrament, that it be *ordain'd by Christ himself*; for tho it may be administred and apply'd by others by his Authority, yet the Institution of it must be from Christ himself: for Christ being the sole Head and Governour of his Church, he hath the sole Power of prescribing the Word and Sacraments that are to be us'd and administred in it. Beside, tho the outward visible Sign be by his Command administred to us by Men like ourselves, yet the conferring of the inward and spiritual Grace, which gives all the Efficacy, belongs only to Christ himself: and therefore a Sacrament must not be of Man's devising, but of God's appointing; it must be no human Invention, but of divine Institution: so that an outward Sign of inward Grace is not sufficient of itself to make a Sacrament, unless it be ordain'd of Christ, who alone can annex the spiritual Grace, and bestow it upon the Use of it. Accordingly we find the two Sacraments of the Old Testament, Circumcision and the Passover, were of Divine Institution, *Gen. 17. 11.* and *Exod. 12.*

And the same hath been shew'd of the two Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; both which were instituted by Christ himself, and by him order'd to be continu'd in his Church till his second Coming, as we may read *Mat. 28. 19.* *1 Cor. 10.*

5. Another Requisite of a Sacrament is, that it be not only ordain'd by Christ, but that it be *ordain'd as a Means to convey Grace*, and a necessary Condition of Salvation. And this distinguishes the Sacraments from other Ecclesiastical

tical Rites and Ceremonies; for these are not requir'd as Means of Grace, and necessary to Salvation, but only as Rules of external Order and Decency; not to beget Faith, but to preserve Unity: whereas the Sacraments are instituted to beget and increase Grace in us. The one enters us into a State of Salvation, and the other helps to continue us in it; for by Baptism we receive the Holy Ghost for the renewing our Natures; and by the Lord's Supper we receive fresh Supplies of Grace from it, for the reforming our Lives: by both we are built up in our Holy Faith, and kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation. So that these Sacraments are appointed by God as the Means of Grace, and the Instruments of our Happiness, to convey to us the Waters of Life, and to feed our Souls with the Food of Immortality. The Sacraments of the Old Law were ordain'd to admit those that receiv'd them into Covenant with God, and intitled them to all the Mercy and Benefit of the Legal Sacrifices; and the Sacraments of the Gospel serve to the like or better Purposes, *vis.* to enter us into Christ's Church, and interest us in all the Merits of his Death and Intercession.

Lastly, 'Tis requir'd to a Sacrament, not only that it be appointed as a *Means of Grace*, but that it be *ordain'd as a Pledge to assure us thereof*. This is requisite to confirm our Faith, and encourage our Obedience, both which are too apt to fail without some token of Assurance to support them; and therefore our Saviour ordain'd the Holy Sacraments, not only as the Means of Grace, but as Props to our Faith, and Pledges to assure us of the Truth of his Promises: for which reason they are sometimes styl'd *the First Fruits*, sometimes *the Earnest of our purchas'd Possession*. For as the First Fruits serve to ascertain the after Harvest, and an Earnest is given to confirm a Bargain; so the Holy Sacraments are appointed to convey and work Grace in us, as the First Fruits and Pledges of our future Glory: by these we taste and see that the Lord is gracious, and have our Hopes in him supported by visible and sensible Representations: *He has sealed us* (says the Apostle) *and given unto us the Earnest of his Spirit*, 2 Cor. 1. 22. This he doth by giving us the Holy Sacraments as the Pledges and Assurances of his Love, which are the Signs and Seals of the New Covenant, to confirm us in the Truth of his Promises, and the Immutability of his Counsels.

Thus

Thus we see the Nature of a Sacrament, and what is imply'd in the Notion of it. From whence we may learn,

1. To magnify and meditate upon the great Love of God, in condescending thus to instruct us by visible Signs and Tokens: he knew how backward we are to learn, and how apt to forget; and therefore he vouchsafes to teach us, not only by the hearing of the Ear, but by the sight of the Eye, presenting to our view some lively Symbols and Representations, the better to imprint his Truths on our Mind, and to preserve the Memory of his Goodness. The Holy Sacraments are visible ways of Instruction to help the slowness of our Understanding, and to enable us to receive and retain the Knowledge of God. Herein he is pleas'd graciously to comply with our Weakness, and by the most likely and lively means to instil his Grace and Truth into us; appointing Water to purify us in Baptism, and Wine to remember him in the Lord's Supper. This is an Act of his fatherly Care and Tendernefs of us, and shews how willing he is that we should know and remember the things which belong to our Peace; which therefore ought to be thankfully acknowledged and accepted by us.

2. From what has been said of the Nature, we may satisfy our selves in the Number of the Sacraments; for all the foremention'd Requisites of a Sacrament are to be found in those two of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in no other: and therefore there can be no Reason of multiplying or adding more to them, as some have done; for Matrimony, Orders, Penance, and the like, are not requir'd of all, nor are they generally necessary as Means of Salvation, or as Pledges to assure us thereof; and therefore want many Requisites to denominate them truly and properly Sacraments. Much less may the Rights and Ceremonies of the Church be styl'd by that Name (as others have vainly objected) for these are neither ordain'd by Christ, nor do they convey Grace, nor are they us'd as any Pledges or Assurances of it; but are only human Institutions appointed for the Decency and Solemnity of Divine Worship.

Indeed, this word Sacrament is no where to be found in Holy Scripture, and therefore we cannot derive the Sense or Notion of it from Divine Authority; 'tis a Term taken up and us'd by the Church, to express some peculiar Signs and Institutions, which we find appointed by God as the Means of Grace, and an Earnest to assure us of it. This then being the Sense which the Church hath put upon this Word,

Word, nothing is to be reckon'd of a Sacramental Nature, that wants any of those Qualifications: and this will not only confine the Notion of a Sacrament to those two mention'd in the Catechism, but cut off all the supernumerary Sacraments added by the Church of *Rome*: and likewise vindicate our Church from the false Imputation of Sectaries, as if she took the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church into that Number.

Lastly, From what has been said concerning the meaning of this word Sacrament, we may learn to preserve a due Reverence and pious Esteem of the two Sacraments of the New Testament, receiving them as Pledges of the Divine Love, and the Earnest of our future Happiness. Let us beware of denying or delaying of Baptism, which enters us into Christ's Church; nor let us neglect the Lord's Supper, which leads us on to his Holy Table: but being both ordain'd by Christ himself, let us live in a due Observance and Estimation of them; and thus by using them as the Means of Grace now, they will ere long bring us to Glory.



DISCOURSE V.

MAT. xxviii. 19.

Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

I Have, according to the Direction of the Catechism, and the Commission of the Text, taught you the Nature, the Necessity, and the Number of the Holy Sacraments; and shew'd what is requir'd to the making and receiving of them as such.

The next Question is, *How many Parts be there in a Sacrament?*

To which the Answer is, *Two; the outward Visible Sign, and the inward Spiritual Grace.* Both which being explain'd in the foregoing Discourse, will need no farther Explication. And therefore having spoken of the Sacraments in general, and the Parts of them, I proceed now to discourse more particularly of each of them.

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To which end, the next thing ask'd in the Catechism is,
What is the outward visible Sign or Form in Baptism?

The Answer whereunto is, *Water, wherein the Person is baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

Here we are directed to begin with Baptism, which being the Sacrament of Admission into the Church, must be first taught and learnt by us. In order to which, 'tis enquir'd, First, What is the outward visible Sign in Baptism? and that is, *Water*. And, Secondly, What is the Form us'd in it? and that is, *In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. Of both which I shall treat from these words of our Saviour, *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing them, &c.* Where, baptizing being a washing with Water, signifies to us, That the outward visible Sign of this Sacrament, is the Element of Water, which is by Christ ordain'd and consecrated to this purpose. Indeed, Water hath such a natural Faculty of cleansing, as renders it a fit Symbol of Purification; and has accordingly been us'd in all Ages and Countries to that end: hence we read of *several kinds of Washings* in use among the Jews, *Heb. 9. 36.* They never admitted any Profelytes without this Ceremony: The Priests and Levites were not to enter upon their Office, till they were sanctify'd by the washing with Water, *Exod. 29. 4.* If any Uncleanness had come upon a Man under the Law, either by touching a dead Corps, or by Leprosy, or any other way, he was commanded to wash in pure Water, and was thereby judg'd clean. The *Israelites* were said to be baptiz'd in the Sea, *1 Cor. 10.* *Naaman* the Syrian was bid to go and wash in *Jordan*, to be cleansed of his Leprosy: And the blind Man was order'd to wash in the Pool of *Siloam*, that he might be healed. Water then, by reason of its natural property of Cleansing, is an Emblem of Purity, and hath been ever used by all Nations in the Rites of their Religion: Our Saviour therefore, who never affected any needless Innovations, thought fit to continue this as the Rite of Initiation into his Church. Accordingly we find *John the Baptist*, in compliance with this antient Practice, baptized with Water in the River *Jordan*, where Christ himself came to his Baptism, and thereby left an Example of his own Institution. By all which it plainly appears, how fitly our Church declares Water to be the outward visible Sign in this Sacrament.

But how is Water to be us'd in the celebrating of this Sacrament? This must be spoken to, because we find

some difference about the Manner of applying this Element: Some require the dipping of the Baptized Person, and washing him all over, in imitation of *John the Baptist*, who plunged all those that came to him in the River *Jordan*; others think the sprinkling of Water sufficient, and the washing of one Part may serve for the whole.

But this being only a Mode or Circumstance of this Duty, consideration may be had of the different Climates and Customs of Countries; and likewise of the different Strength or Weakness of the baptized Parties. Indeed, in those hotter Countries where Bathing was commonly us'd, it is more than probable that this Sacred Rite was perform'd by dipping or plunging the whole Body in Water. Thus *John the Baptist* living in those warmer Regions, at the first Institution of Baptism, plunged his Disciples: But yet even in those Places this was not thought absolutely necessary to Baptism, for Clinicks, and other infirm and diseased Persons were then allow'd to be sprinkled, and the Fathers generally own this for a lawful Baptism. And therefore in the more northern and colder Climates, where Infants, especially in the Winter Season, could not without imminent Danger be thus plung'd in Cold Water, the Prudence and Charity of the Church admitted them into it by sprinkling: And because God hath declar'd that he will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, this Indulgence to tender Infants is continued in those colder Countries to this day. Sutable whereunto our Church, according to the antient Practice, first recommends Immersion or Dipping, where Strength will bear; but yet allowing of Sprinkling to the weakness of Children, this hath prevail'd above the other, and is become the common Practice. Indeed.

The words βαπτω and βαπτίζω in the Original signify both, and may be apply'd as well to Sprinkling as Dipping. And the Practice of the Apostles and Primitive Christians extended to both: for tho they who were baptiz'd in *Jordan* and *Enon* were receiv'd by dipping, yet we read of whole Families baptiz'd in their own Houses; and particularly of the Jaylor and all his Household baptiz'd at home, and at Midnight too; which could not well be but by Sprinkling, as we read *Acts* 16. 32, 33. And 'tis probable that the three thousand Converts baptiz'd upon St. *Peter's* Sermon, the same day, and in the Place where they were assembled, were received into the Church the same way; for if it had been otherwise, it would have required another

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Place, and a longer Time. However that be, 'tis certain that 'tis not the quantity of Water in Baptism, no more than the quantity of Wine in the Lord's Supper, but the Holy Spirit of God that gives all the Virtue and Efficacy to both; and therefore imploring that, we need not raise any Doubts or Disputes about either.

In short then, to clear up this Matter, we must distinguish between what is necessary and essential to Baptism, and what is only accidental or circumstantial to it: For the former, the Element of Water, the Form of Words in the Administration, and Persons duly qualify'd and authoriz'd thereunto, are made necessary to this Sacrament by the Command of our Saviour, which things must therefore be constantly observ'd and kept to in the Celebration of it.

But for the latter, to wit, the Quantity of Water, and the Manner of using it, whether by applying Water to the Person by Sprinkling, or the Person to the Water by Dipping, these things being under no Command, nor any where determin'd in Holy Scripture, are left indifferent; and if we do not urge the one as necessary to the excluding of the other, Baptism may be lawfully and effectually perform'd by either.

Pass we then from the outward visible Sign in Baptism, which is Water, to the Form of Words to be us'd in the Administration of it; and that, both our Text and Catechism tells, must be *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Now to baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may imply in it these two or three things.

1. That we baptize by the Commission and Authority of these three Persons.

2. That we baptize into the Faith of the three Persons of the Trinity. Or,

3. That we confirm our Baptism by the Witness of these three Persons. A word or two of each. And,

1. I say, To baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is to baptize by the Authority and Commission of the three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity: for so the Commission given in our Text expressly runs; *Go, baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, Son, &c.* Which Commission was first given to the Apostles by Christ himself, and in them to all their Successors, with whom he promis'd to be to the end of the World.

World. And as this requires and authorizes them so to do, so doth it forbid all others from meddling with it; for the Command, to go and baptize all Nations, is join'd with the Office of Preaching or Teaching all Nations: So that none may presume to baptize, but such as have Authority to preach; and none but lawful Ministers have any Authority to do either. And therefore (as a learned Author tells us) the Church of old forbid all Women to baptize; the Council of *Carthage* did the same: And *Epiphanius* accounted it ridiculous in *Marcion* and his Followers, to permit Women to do that Office. Sutable hereunto, our Church allows no Midwives to baptize, but confines this Office to lawfully ordain'd and authoriz'd Ministers; chusing rather to leave Infants in cases of Necessity to the Mercy of God, than to violate and transgress his own Commission. Baptism then being thus ordain'd by the Son of God, and consecrated by his Holy Spirit, may and ought to be solemniz'd in the Name of the whole Trinity.

2. To baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is to baptize in the Belief of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity, and shews that they own their Faith in each: by this Form is signify'd our Reception into that Church, which is distinguish'd from Jews, Turks, and Infidels, by believing three Persons and one God. Upon this Article of the Trinity, all the Christian Religion is founded; and therefore upon our entrance on Christianity, we are baptiz'd into this Faith, and by this Form us'd in it, are taught ever after to profess and adhere to it: and therefore *St. Ambrose* tells us, that when Persons of riper Years came to be baptiz'd, they were ask'd three times in the Belief of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity; and were put into the Water first when they profess'd their Belief in the Father, and again when they profess'd their Belief in the Son, and the third time upon their Belief in the Holy Ghost. This is that Trine Immersion of which we read so often in the antient Fathers; which tho' wisely enough us'd upon the Authority and Practice of the Church, yet may not be urg'd as necessary, when under no Command.

3. To baptize in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is to call in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, as Witnesses of our being baptiz'd in the Belief of them: this is intimated to us by *St. John*, in *1 John* 5. 7. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these Three are one.* Now this Record

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is not only to ascertain to us the Truth of the Holy Trinity, but to secure our Faith in it, and to aggravate our Infidelity if we apostatize from it.

Thus we see both the outward visible Sign, and Form in Baptism, together with the Manner of applying the one, and the Reason of using the other. I shall conclude both with an Inference or two from each. And,

1. If Water be the only outward and visible Sign appointed by our Saviour in this Sacrament, then we see upon what slender ground all other Additions to it stand. There is a certain Church in the World, that hath clogg'd this Institution of Christ, with many other cumbersome and uncommanded Signs; adding Oil, Cream, and Spittle, as necessary and significant Rites in the Administration of it. Had Christ instituted no outward Sign in this Ordinance, he might be suppos'd to have left it to the Appointment of the Church; but having taken such particular care to assign the washing with Water, as the fittest Ceremony to represent the inward cleansing, it must be great Presumption either to alter or to add to it: for this is, in some measure, to exalt ourselves above our Saviour, and to teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. St. *Austin* tells us of one *Seleucus*, who baptiz'd with branding with an hot Iron, from a gross Abuse of that Prediction of our Saviour, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*; where Fire is to be taken for that outward Appearance of the Holy Ghost, who came down on the Apostles in the Form of Fire; or if it be any thing distinct from it, can be meant only of that Fervency of Spirit, with which he inspir'd them: So that this is a gross perverting of Holy Scripture, and all other Additions that are made necessary and essential to this Ordinance, are no better.

2. From what has been said concerning the applying of the outward visible Sign of Water in this Sacrament, either by dipping or sprinkling, both which are included in the word *Baptizing*, and have been promiscuously us'd, according to the different Climates and Customs of several Countries; we may learn the gross Error and Superstition of the Anabaptists, who require Dipping as the only necessary and effectual way of administering this Sacrament, and decry all other Baptisms as invalid, that are not perform'd in this way: which Error they have been unhappily led into, partly by not knowing the true Sense and Meaning of the word *Baptizing*, partly by their Ignorance of the
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antient and modern Use of it in the several Ages of the Church; but chiefly by the cunning Craftiness of Deceivers, who have instill'd these false Notions into them to serve some other purposes: whereas 'tis not so much the Quantity of Water, or the outward washing of the Body, as the inward purifying of the Soul, that renders it effectual. So St. Peter tells us, That *Baptism now saves us, not by the washing of Water, but by the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.*

Lastly, From what hath been said concerning the Form of Administration in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we may learn strictly to observe and keep to it. This is so expressly requir'd in the Institution of this Sacrament, that all have been branded for Hereticks, who have departed or vary'd from it. We read of *Dionysius* a *Carthusian* Monk, who baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord God; and of *Theophranius* and *Eutyches*, who baptiz'd in the Death of Christ; and of *Valentinus* an antient Heretick, who baptiz'd in the Name of the unknown God, and of the Truth the Mother of us all. But these and the like Baptisms have been judg'd invalid, as wanting a necessary and essential part of Christ's Institution, and the Parties censur'd for Apostates from the Faith, that us'd or countenanc'd them. But generally, the Form here prescrib'd by our blessed Saviour, hath every where obtain'd in the Christian Church; which should teach us firmly to adhere to it, without any Addition to or Alteration from it.





DISCOURSE VI.

ROM. vi. 4.

Therefore we are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was rais'd from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.

HAVING seen the outward visible Sign or Form in Baptism, viz. *Water, wherein the Person is baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; I proceed to the inward spiritual Grace, signify'd or represented by it, which in general is the washing or cleansing of the Soul from all Impurities. This is the Subject of the Next Question, wherein 'tis ask'd, *What is the inward and spiritual Grace?* The Answer whereunto is, *A Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness: for being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Of which I shall treat from these words of the Apostle; *We are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was rais'd from the dead, so we also should walk in Newness of Life.* Where we may observe,

First, The two great Benefits and Privileges of Baptism, viz. *A Death unto Sin*, in those words, *We are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death*; and *a new Birth unto Righteousness*, in those, *That like as Christ was rais'd from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.*

Secondly, We have the Illustration or Confirmation of both, partly from the Misery of our natural State, in those words; *For being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath*: partly from the Happiness of the State to which Baptism translates us, in those, *We are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Of which particularly, beginning with the

First Branch of this inward and spiritual Grace, viz. *Death unto Sin*, express'd in the Text, by being *bury'd with Christ by Baptism into Death*: where the Apostle alludes to the antient Custom of plunging the baptiz'd Party over head and ears in the Water, whereby being a while cover'd over and lost in that Element, he seem'd to be dead and bury'd in it. This he calls a being *bury'd with Christ by Baptism*; and in the next verse, being *planted together in the likeness of his Death*; that like as Christ was swallow'd up of Death, and bury'd in the Earth, so they were overwhelm'd in Baptism, and bury'd in the Water. This Immersion was design'd to represent not only the Death of Christ, which he underwent for our Sins, but likewise our dying unto Sin, and bidding adieu to it: and therefore antiently they who were baptiz'd, were wont to put off their Garments, to signify the putting off the Body of Sin, and were a while cover'd over and bury'd in the Water, to signify their being dead to it; which is our being bury'd with Christ by Baptism into Death, not a natural Death, consisting in the Separation of the Soul from the Body, nor such a spiritual Death as consists in the Separation of the Soul from God, but such a one as denotes the Separation of the Soul from Sin, the killing and mortifying all corrupt Desires and Inclinations, and the forsaking of all evil Courses. *How shall we that are dead to Sin* (saith the Apostle) *live any longer therein? Know ye not that as many as were baptiz'd into Christ, were baptiz'd into his Death?* Of this Death unto Sin we find frequent mention in the Holy Scripture: the Promise and Practice whereof was so well known in the primitive Times, that the Apostle speaks of it as a thing firmly assented to and acknowledg'd by all Christians: *Knowing this* (saith he) *that the old Man is crucify'd with him, that the body of Sin might be destroy'd, that henceforth we should not serve Sin; for he that is dead, is freed from Sin*: ver. 6, 7. All which plainly declare the Design of Baptism to be the killing of Sin in us, and destroying the Power and Dominion of it, that it may no longer reign in our mortal Bodies. Hereby we are made conformable to Christ's Death, by dying unto Sin, for which he died, and burying all our Iniquities in his Grave.

2. The other Branch of this inward and spiritual Grace, is a new Birth unto Righteousness, represented in the Text by Christ's Resurrection, *That like as he was rais'd from*

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be dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life: and as we are planted in the likeness of his Death, so are we in the likeness of his Resurrection. This is farther set forth by the antient Practice of Dipping or Plunging the baptiz'd Party; where, as his being put under the Water signify'd his being dead and bury'd unto Sin, so his rising again out of it, betoken'd his rising to a new State, and walking in Newness of Life. Hence our blessed Saviour hath made this the Sacrament of our new Birth, telling us, that *except we are born again of Water and the Spirit, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* St. Paul styles it the *Laver of Regeneration*, and joins to it the *Renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. signifying, that the Holy Spirit is confer'd in Baptism for the Renovation of our Nature, to qualify us for that new State we then enter upon, and to enable us to perform the Duties that belong to, and we undertake in it: this is fitly represented by Water, which is of a healing and cleansing Nature, and purifies from all Pollution. That this Privilege is confer'd in Baptism, the Holy Scripture is express: *Be baptiz'd (saith St. Peter) in the Name of Christ, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost*, Acts 2. 38. *We are baptiz'd (saith St. Paul) into one Body, and made to drink of the same Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. We find a Promise in *Ezekiel*, that God would in the latter days *sprinkle clean Water upon them, and they should be clean from all their filthiness, and when a new Heart would he give them, and put a new Spirit within them*, Ezek. 36. 25, 26. That this Promise was accordingly fulfill'd, the Writings of the New Testament may abundantly satisfy us; where we read not only of many miraculous Gifts bestow'd in Baptism for the Edification of the Church, but likewise of many Graces confer'd on Christians, for the sanctifying and renewing their Natures, by which they are said to be regenerated and born again, that old things pass away, and all things become new. This is the receiv'd Doctrine of the Catholick Church, both antient and modern, that the Waters of Baptism wash away the Guilt and Pollution of Sin; that the pouring of it out in that Sacrament is accompany'd with the Effusion of the Holy Ghost, and that a real Change is thereby wrought by the Influence of the Divine Spirit.

If it be here ask'd, How then comes it to pass, that all who are baptiz'd are not undoubtedly sav'd, since those great and salutary Effects accompany that Ordinance? In answer to which, I say,

That this proceeds not from any want of Efficacy in this Sacrament, nor from the Insufficiency of Divine Grace confer'd in it; but from Mens not performing the Promises and Conditions engag'd in it: for Baptism being a Covenant, hath Duties and Conditions as well as Benefits and Blessings annex'd to it; and they that will have the one, must perform the other. The inward spiritual Grace of Baptism is not so absolutely and inseparably annex'd to the outward Rite and Performance of it, but that it may be forfeited and lost by not observing the Conditions promis'd and requir'd in it; and this is the unhappy case of too many nominal Christians, who give up their Names to Christ, and take his Name upon them, and yet afterward desert him, flying to the Enemies they renounc'd, and breaking the Articles of their baptismal Covenant; whereby they lose all the Grace and Favour promis'd and bestow'd in it. Some fall back to the Works of the Devil, which they promis'd to forsake; others are led away by the Vanities and Allurements of the World, which they solemnly renounc'd; others again yield themselves up to the Power and Dominion of their Lusts, from which they engag'd to abstain: All which, by violating the most sacred and solemn Vows, justly forfeit all the Grace and Mercy of Baptism, and fall into all the Miseries of a Heathen state; for that which *saves us in Baptism*, is not (as St. Peter tells us) the outward washing of Water, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Conversation. But this will be more fully discours'd of in the next.

Secondly, 'Tis by Baptism then that we are regenerate or new-born, thereby becoming dead unto Sin, and living unto Righteousness; which things are farther illustrated and confirm'd in the next words of the Catechism: *For being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.* Where we have,

1. The Misery of that state in which we are born And,

2. The Happiness of that to which we are translated being baptiz'd.

1. We are said to *be born in Sin, and thereby the Children of Wrath.* This, however deny'd by some Hereticks, has ever been acknowledg'd and bewail'd by the best of Men. David confesses that he *was shapen in Wickedness, and*

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Sin did his Mother conceive him, Psal. 51. 5. St. Paul felt a Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, and leading him captive to the Law of Sin and Death; Rom. 7. which made him cry out, O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin! And we all find those Seeds of Sin rooted in our Nature, that incline us too strongly to all manner of Evil. This Root of Bitterness sprang from the Stock of our first Parents, which corrupted the whole Race of Mankind, and deriv'd the Contagion to all their Posterity: So that we are become the Children of Wrath by being the Children of Disobedience; liable to the just Indignation and Vengeance of our heavenly Father, and obnoxious to all the Punishments due both to our original and actual Transgressions. This is the wretched and miserable State in which we are all born into the World; which may well enough make us enter into it crying, and take possession of it with our Tears.

But God Almighty in pity and compassion to our Souls, hath help'd us out of this forlorn Condition; he hath taken us into the Ark of his Church, to save us from Shipwreck and Destruction; he hath given us a new Birth to preserve us from the Miseries of the old, for thereby the old Man is bury'd, and the new Man is rais'd up in us. And this leads us to consider,

2. That happy State to which we are by Baptism translated, in which we are said to *be made the Children of Grace*; that is, from Children of Wrath and Heirs of Damnation, we become Children of God and Heirs to his heavenly Kingdom: insomuch, that we who had alienated ourselves from God, and forfeited his Favour, are hereby brought home to him, and restor'd again to his especial Care and Affection. We are made the Children of Grace,

(1.) By being taken as Children into his Family, admitted into his Church, and made Members of his mystical Body; which is a signal Favour to those who were before Strangers and Enemies unto him by evil Works: *We are all baptiz'd (saith St. Paul) by one Spirit into one Body, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And as many as have been baptiz'd into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27.* that is, have put on the Regeneration of Children, and are receiv'd into his Grace and Favour.

(2.) As Children of Grace we receive the Remission of Sin: *Arise, and be baptiz'd (saith St. Peter) for the Remission of Sin.* Our original Guilt is wash'd away in that Laver of Regeneration,

ration, and we are secur'd, upon easy terms, of a Pardon for all actual Transgressions.

Lastly, As Children of Grace we are intitled to an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Glory; so St. Peter assures us, that we are hereby begotten again unto a lively Hope of an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefil'd, and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in Heaven for us*; 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. 'Tis the express Promise of our Saviour, *He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be sav'd*, Mark 16. 16. The saving of Noah and his Family in the Flood, was a Type of our Salvation by Baptism; where, as they who were taken into the Ark escap'd that universal Deluge that drown'd the corrupt part of Mankind, so they who are receiv'd into Christ's Church shall be sav'd from the common Destruction that shall be tide the wicked World. Again, the *Israelites safe Passage thro' the Red Sea*, that overwhelm'd the *Egyptians*, is a farther Figure of this Salvation; where the Waters that drown'd the latter, prov'd only a Wall of Defence and Protection to the former: In like manner the Waters of Baptism now save us by the washing of Regeneration and being consecrated and us'd to this divine and holy purpose, preserve us from perishing by them.

Thus we see both the outward visible Sign and Form in Baptism, and likewise the inward spiritual Grace signify'd and represented by it; both which may give us to understand,

1. The inestimable Benefits and Privileges of Baptism which rescues us from the Miseries of our natural State, and restores us to a State of Salvation; making us, from Children of Wrath, to become the Children of God: And this it does by that inward spiritual Grace, by which we become dead unto Sin and bury'd with him in Baptism; and alive unto Righteousness, walking before him in Newness of Life: which should make us ever mindful of, and desirous to attain these blessed Effects of this holy Ordinance.

2. Since this spiritual Grace is not only signify'd by, but annex'd to the outward Sign, it may teach us carefully to use the one in order to the other. Our blessed Saviour hath appointed the outward washing with Water, as a means of purifying the inward Man; and therefore we must not omit the former, if we have any hopes of obtaining the latter. This is the external Rite instituted to represent and convey this Grace to us, and 'twill be our Interest as well as Duty not to neglect the Sign and Seal that secures it to us.

To conclude, This Discourse may teach us not to slight or omit (as some Sectaries do) this holy and beneficial Ordinance : for if Christ himself hath ordain'd it as a means of conveying Grace and Mercy to us, 'twill be a vain Presumption to alledge or hope that we may be sav'd without it.

DISCOURSE VII.

ACTS ii. 38.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins. Together with

ACTS viii. 37.

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy Heart, thou mayst be baptiz'd.

HAVING spoken to the outward visible Sign and Form in Baptism, and likewise of the inward spiritual Grace represented by it, and thereby set before you the great Benefit and Blessings promis'd and convey'd by that Sacrament ; I proceed to the next Inquiry of the Catechism, which is into the Duties and Conditions requir'd in order to the obtaining of those Blessings, in these words :

What is requir'd of them that are to be baptiz'd ?

To which the Answer is, *Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin ; and Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the Promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.* Where Repentance and Faith are made the two Conditions or Qualifications of Baptism ; both which must be therefore particularly handled : beginning

First with Repentance ; of which I shall treat briefly from these words, *Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you, for the Remission of Sins.* The words are part of that famous and successful Sermon of St. Peter to the Jews, wherein

after he had from the Excellency of Christ's Doctrine and Miracles confirm'd the Truth of his Messiahship, he proceeds to upbraid them for their barbarous and ungrateful Carriage towards him, charging them with the Guilt of crucifying the Son of God, and putting to death the Lord of Life: which he did with that Smartness and Vigor, that gall'd their Minds and awaken'd their Consciences. For in the Verse before the Text, we read that upon hearing his Discourse they *were prick'd at the Heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, What shall we do?* St. Peter who had made the Wound, prescribes the Remedy; willing them, by the Tears of Repentance and the Waters of Baptism, to wash away their Sin: *And he said unto them Repent and be baptiz'd every one of you, for the Remission of Sins.* In speaking to which words, I must,

1st, Inquire into the Nature of Repentance: And,

2^{dly}, Shew it to be a necessary Condition of Baptism.

For the Nature of Repentance, 'tis, in short, a turning from Sin unto God; where is imply'd a double Act, viz. A turning from Sin, and a turning unto God. I style it a turning from Sin, not indeed intirely and totally from the Act and Commission of it, for that our present State will not admit of, the best of us falling several times a day, and in many things we offend all: but from the Love and Delight in it, and as far as may be from the Practice and Continuance of it. This is express'd in Scripture sometimes by *eschewing and abhorring of Evil*, sometimes by *fleeing from and forsaking of Sin*, sometimes by *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, and the like; all which shew that the Bent and Inclination of the Mind is to be set against Evil: And tho we may fall sometimes by Inadvertence, Surprise, and the Importunity of Temptation, yet we are to rise again by Repentance, and recover ourselves by imploring the Assistance of Divine Grace. So that this Act of Repentance, whereby we forsake Sin, includes in it,

1. A hearty Sorrow for past Offences: And,

2. Firm Purposes and Resolutions of future Amendment.

1. I say, Repentance includes in it a hearty Sorrow for all past Offences. This is that Compunction of Spirit, or pricking at the Heart, mention'd in the foregoing Verse, whereby the Jews, upon St. Peter's displaying to them the Heinousness of their Guilt, were struck with Grief and Remorse for what they had done, and cry'd out in the anguish and bitterness of their Souls for Directions what to do.

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This St. Paul styles a godly Sorrow, that worketh Repentance not to be repented of. This is necessary to the turning away from Sin ; for none can repent of that for which he is not sorry, nor will any turn from a thing that is not grievous and irksome to him.

But a bare Sorrow for Sin, or an Uneasiness under it, is not of itself sufficient to true Repentance, without firm Purposes and Resolutions of Amendment ; for the greatest Sinners many times feel an Uneasiness after their Commission of Sin, and are frequently ashamed and sorry for what they have done : but if this be not attended with an inward hatred and forsaking of Sin, it will but aggravate the Guilt and increase the Condemnation. And therefore the Psalmist tells us, that his Heart was set against Evil, and that he was stedfastly purpos'd to keep God's righteous Judgments. To make our Repentance thorough and sound, we must bid adieu to our Sins, and abandon our Iniquities : *Let the wicked forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts*, saith the Prophet Isaiah, chap. 58. And this must extend to all Sin in general, not sparing our peculiar and beloved Vice, but *hating the very Garment spotted with the Flesh, and avoiding all the Appearance of Evil.*

Lastly, we are so to turn from Sin, as never to return to it any more. This is imply'd in renouncing the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, together with all the Works and Temptations of each ; which being treated of at large in the first Part, I shall not need to add any more here, but refer you thither. But beside this first Act of turning from Sin, there is,

2. Another Act of Repentance, which is the turning unto God. This is the positive and indeed the principal Branch of this Virtue ; for 'tis not enough to cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. 'Tis but half our Duty to refrain from Sin ; to make it intire, we must add the doing of Good : Hence we are commanded not only to *abhor that which is evil, but to cleave to that which is good*, Rom. 12. And to *denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, to add *living righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World* ; Tit. 2. 12. Because God is the Author and Fountain of all Good, to turn to him, is to turn to all Good ; to add *one Virtue to another*, and to be daily growing in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason we are often call'd upon to *turn unto the Lord*, if we have gone astray, to *return to him*, and to *cleave unto him with full*

full purpose of Heart. And this is to be done not now and then, by fits and starts, but always, even to the end. We are so to turn to God, as to keep with him, and never to forsake him; and then he has promis'd never to leave or forsake us.

This is briefly the Nature of Repentance, which is here made a necessary Condition of Baptism; which is the

Next thing to be spoken to: And this is so plainly laid down, not only in our Catechism, but the Holy Scripture, that I shall not need to insist much upon it: *Repent and be baptiz'd* (saith St. Peter;) where Repentance is the Term upon which this Sacred Rite is to be administer'd. This is evident not only from the Doctrine of *John the Baptist*, whose Baptism was administer'd with the Confession of Sin, call'd therefore *the Baptism of Repentance*, and was accompany'd with an Exhortation to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*: but likewise from the Practice of the Christian Church, in which Repentance always preceded Baptism, and was made a necessary Preparative to, and Condition of it: which Condition was immediately and personally requir'd of those that were capable of performing it; and mediately by others, of those that were not, as we shall see after.

Having shew'd the first Requisite of Baptism, viz. Repentance whereby we forsake Sin; let us go on to the second, viz. *Faith, whereby we stedfastly believe the Promises of God made in that Sacrament.* Where I must,

1st, Explain to you the Nature of Faith, what it is: And,

2^{dly}, Shew it to be a necessary Requisite and Condition of Baptism. For the Nature of Faith;

In general, it is a firm Belief or Persuasion of the Truth of God's Word; that all the Doctrine deliver'd by him, or dictated by his Holy Spirit, is undoubtedly true; and that the Holy Scriptures are the infallible Oracles of God, and contain the Words of eternal Life.

More particularly, the Faith here requir'd is a firm Belief or Persuasion of that part of God's Word which contains his gracious Promises, and the Tenders of his Mercy and Salvation, and especially those that are sign'd and seal'd to us in Baptism; for the Catechism describes it to be such a Faith, whereby we *stedfastly believe the Promises of God made to us in that Sacrament.*

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What those Promises are, hath been shew'd before, viz. *the Remission of Sins, the Gift of the Holy Ghost*; God's taking us into Covenant with himself, whereby he becomes to us a Father, and we to him as Sons; his taking care of us in this World, and providing an Inheritance for us in the next; in order to which, he gives us his Grace to enable us to do our Duty, and to persevere in it unto the end: These are the great and invaluable Blessings promis'd and confer'd in Baptism. Now because without Faith it is impossible to please God or profit ourselves, the Faith here requir'd implies,

1. A steadfast Belief or firm Assent to the Truth of these Promises; without this, we make God a Lyar, and take him for such a false or impotent Being, that is not to be rely'd on: for this reason it is, that Infidelity or Unbelief stands condemn'd in the Gospel, as the greatest of Sins, because it calls in question either the Power or the Truth and Faithfulness of God, and in effect robs him of the Glory of all his Attributes: which things, as they carry with them the greatest Guilt, so will they draw after them the sorest Punishment. To prevent this, we are steadfastly to believe the Promises of God, not wavering in Doubts or fluctuating in Uncertainties, but relying upon them as an Anchor of the Soul sure and steadfast. 'Tis recorded to the Honour of *Abraham*, that *he stagger'd not thro' Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God*: meaning that he steadfastly believ'd the Promises of God made in the New Covenant, and never departed from a firm and unshaken Assent to the Truth of them. And this is the first Branch of a true and saving Faith.

2. This Faith implies not only a firm Assent of the Mind to the Truth of the Promises, but a suitable Consent of the Will and Affections to love and embrace them, and to lead our Lives in the hopes and by the influence of them. For Baptism being a Covenant, hath Duties to be perform'd on our part, as well as Privileges promis'd on God's; and as Faith teaches us to believe the one, so doth it lead us likewise to the Practice of the other. This the Apostle styles a *Faith that works by Love*: and tells us that *Faith without such Works is dead, being alone*: and can neither answer the Ends of Baptism, nor procure to us the Benefits of it. And this will lead us, in the

Next place, to shew that such a Faith is a necessary Requisite and Condition of Baptism; for so our Saviour himself

self hath made it, Mark 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Where he declares Faith to be a necessary Concomitant of Baptism, to render it effectual to Salvation; and where 'tis wanting, the outward Rite can neither save or secure us from Damnation. According to which Doctrine, *Philip* told the Eunuch, *That if he believ'd with all his heart he might be baptiz'd*; and upon his saying, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, was receiv'd to Baptism. The Jaylor, in the Acts of the Apostles, made a Confession of his Sins and a Profession of his Faith, before he and his Household were baptiz'd, Acts 16. 30. Sutable whereunto, the Christian Church hath ever requir'd of adult or grown Persons the Rehearſal of the Creed before Baptism; and for others of tender years, their Undertakers in their Name declar'd their stedfast Belief of it, before they were admitted to this Ordinance: Which Custom, in conformity to the Rules and Practice of the Catholick Church, continues with us to this day.

Thus I have briefly consider'd the two great Conditions or Qualifications of Baptism, Repentance and Faith; both which we see are expreſſy requir'd, to make it available to thoſe Ends for which it was ordain'd.

All that remains, is to preſs you to a due Obſervance and Practice of them: And,

1. Let all that are baptiz'd call to mind that Promise of Repentance they made in it, and lead their Lives in a due ſenſe of and conformity to it: This was the Condition upon which you were admitted into the Number of Chriſt's Diſciples; be not then unmindful of it, nor walk contrary to it. You promiſed to forſake Sin, and how can you then live any longer therein? You ſolemnly renounc'd the Devil, and what have you now to do with any of his Works? You bid defiance to the World, with all the Poms and Vanities of it, and how can you liſten or be led away by any of its Temptations? You engag'd to mortify the Fleſh, with its Affections and Luſts, and how come you to be ſo eaſily betray'd and miſled by them? Remember that you were waſh'd with the Waters of Baptiſm, and had your Soul cleaſ'd from all Impurities in that ſacred Laver of Regeneration. Do not then return with the Dog to his Vomit, and the Sow that was waſh'd to her wallowing in the Mire: Do not forget ſuch ſolemn Engagements, which will bring on you the heavy Guilt of perjur'd Perſons and Renegadoes;

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2. Let all baptiz'd Persons be ever mindful likewise of that other Condition of Baptism, and firmly adhere to that Faith which they profess'd to own and receive in it. You solemnly promis'd, at your entrance upon Christianity, to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and to continue stedfast in that Faith to your Lives end: Do not then turn Apostates or Revolvers from it, but stand firm to it against all the Attempts and Opposition of Deceivers. This is the Apostle's Advice, *Heb. 10. 23. Having our Bodies wash'd with pure Water, let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering.* This is more especially to be minded in this corrupt and degenerate Age, in which most of the Articles of the Creed are deny'd or derided. Indeed never were more or greater Shipwrecks made of the Christian Faith, than in our unhappy days. Have we not some that call in question the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and instead of renouncing the Devil and all his Works, renounce the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Name they were baptiz'd? Are there not others who laugh at a crucify'd Saviour, and deny the very Lord that bought them? Do not some make a mock of the Resurrection and future Judgment, saying with the Scoffers of old, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* 'Tis therefore high time to call to mind our Baptismal Vow, to remember what we promis'd in it, and to endeavour to preserve the Christian Faith, which is in so great danger of being lost.

DISCOURSE VIII.

ACTS xvi. 33. latter part.

And was baptiz'd, he and all his, straitway.

WE have consider'd Baptism as a Covenant, wherein as there are many Blessings and Privileges promis'd on God's part, so there are many Duties and Conditions to be perform'd on ours: both which are by outward Signs and Seals ratify'd and confirm'd to us.

The next Question is concerning the Persons to be admitted into this Covenant, and particularly whether Infants,

Infants, who know nothing of the Nature, End, or Obligations of it, are capable of being receiv'd into it.

The Inquiry is in these words, *Why then are Infants baptiz'd, when by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform this?* To which the Answer is,

Because they promise them both by their Sureties, which Promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform. Where we have,

First, Infant-Baptism plainly suppos'd: And,

Secondly, The Objection taken from their Inability of performing the Conditions answer'd: *Because they promise both by Sureties; which Promise being in their Name, and for their Good, when they come to riper years, themselves are bound to perform.*

First then, the Question why Infants are baptiz'd, manifestly implies that they are and ought to be so: which being oppos'd by an upstart and obstinate Sect among us, will require to be a little clear'd and confirm'd to us: and this I shall do from these words, *he was baptiz'd, and all his, straitway.* The words are spoken of the Jaylor, who having *Paul* and *Silas* his close Prisoners, felt at midnight a great Earthquake, which shak'd both the House and himself, and open'd at once the Prison-Doors and the Keeper's Heart. From this trembling of the Earth, he concluded his Prisoners to be some Divine Persons; and therefore *came trembling to them, saying, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* They reply'd to him, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved and thine House.* Upon the Profession of which Faith, *he was baptiz'd and all his straitway;* where Children and Servants being reckon'd as the Parent's Goods, are included here in *all his*, and were indeed the only things of his that could be baptiz'd with him. The same is affirm'd of *Crispus*, a *Ruler of the Synagogue*, who *believing in the Lord Jesus with all his House*, were all admitted to Baptism, *Acts* 18. 8. Beside which, we read of many other Families, as *Gaius* and *Stephanas*, who with their whole Households were baptiz'd, *1 Cor.* 1. 16. Where Children being generally a part, and no small one too in most Families, may be well enough suppos'd to have been baptiz'd with their Parents: tho' these only as the Heads of the Family are particularly nam'd, yet the others may and have been reckon'd to be included in the whole Households.

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However, if none of these Families had any Children, which is absurd to imagine, yet Infants being a part of all Nations, whom the Apostles were sent to baptize, must undoubtedly be within the Commission. Moreover, our blessed Saviour's causing the Children to be brought to him, his checking those that would have kept them from him, his taking them up in his Arms, laying his hands upon them and blessing them, solemnly declaring that theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; plainly shew them capable of being in Covenant with God, and therefore they may very well receive the Seal of it.

Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures manifestly include Children within the Promise of Mercy and Salvation, saying, *The Promise is to you and your Children*; who are therefore said to be *holy*, by a relative and federal Holiness: and consequently may not be deny'd Admission into the Holy Catholick Church.

But the Argument taken from Circumcision is very strong and concluding for Infant-Baptism; for if Infants were receiv'd into the Church by Circumcision under the Law, they may and ought to be receiv'd into it by Baptism under the Gospel.

That Infants were of old admitted by Circumcision, is evident by that express Law given to *Abraham*, requiring every Male Child to be circumcis'd the eighth day, *Gen. 17.* And the general Practice of the Jews was according to it.

The Force of the Consequence is, from Baptism's succeeding in the room of Circumcision: And as this was the Rite of Initiation into the Jewish, so is the former into the Christian Church. Our Saviour made no Alteration as to the Time or Age of those who were to be receiv'd into this Sacred Society; he only chang'd the painful and bloody Rite of Circumcising into the more mild and gentle one of Washing, but left all other things as they were: so that as Children were admitted before, so were they to be still.

Indeed our Saviour may not be so properly said to institute, as to continue this Rite of Baptism under the Gospel; for even under the Law, beside Circumcision, Proselytes and Females were admitted by Washing. Now Christ, to make his Yoke easier and his Burden lighter than 'twas before, was pleas'd to lay aside the one, and to continue the other.

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Moreover, as Circumcision was a discriminating Sign to distinguish the People of the Jews from all other Nations under Heaven, so is Baptism now the distinguishing Mark or Badg to difference Christians from all other Persons. And this must extend to Persons of all Ages and Sexes, Children as well as Men, *Male and Female, for they are all one in Jesus Christ.* Otherwise we shall make the Mercy of the Gospel far less than that under the Law, and the Christian Church much straiter than that of the Jews: For if we exclude Infants out of the Pale of the Church, into which they admitted them, we shall make the Gate narrower and the Number less than 'twas before; whereas Christ hath not straitned, but enlarged his Bowels; he hath widen'd the Gates of his Church, and made it more capacious, receiving all Nations into it, and all the Members of them that come to him. So that if Infants were admitted by the old Dispensation, we may safely conclude, they are not excluded by the new.

But against this the Anabaptist objects, that there is no express Command in Scripture for Infant-Baptism: The Jews were indeed requir'd to circumcise their Children, but shew us (say they) any one Text in the Bible that says, Let Infants be baptized. This is the main Objection of that Sect, by which many ignorant Persons are drawn and deluded into it.

Now if this had any Force, it would exclude all Females both from Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for 'tis no where expressly said that Children or Women should be admitted to either: whereas the Commission to *baptize all Nations*, and the Command, *drink ye all of this*, is sufficient to warrant their Admission to both.

As for Children, God Almighty had fully declar'd his mind in the Old Testament, for taking them into Covenant by Circumcision, *Gen. 17.* and *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12.* And the same is declar'd and repeated over again in the New Testament, by saying, *Your Children are holy, and the Promise is to you and your Children;* and what need was there of any farther Declaration in this matter? Beside,

The Custom of Baptizing as well as Circumcising, was well known and practis'd in the Jewish Church at and before our Saviour's Coming; for when any of the Gentiles became Profelytes, both they and their Children were first circumcis'd, and then wash'd, in token of their cleansing from the Filth of their former Heathenism: so that Bap-

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tism ever accompany'd the Circumcision in profelyting of the Heathens, even to our Saviour's time; and when our Lord enter'd upon his Prophetick Office of teaching the World, he only laid aside the severer Ordinance of Circumcision, and retain'd the easier Ordinance of Baptism, as best suited to the Mildness and Clemency of the Gospel-State.

But Infants (say they) are not particularly nam'd By our Saviour in the Institution of this Ordinance, which alone could give them any title to it. Now the Answer to this, is easy and obvious, *viz.* that there was no need or occasion for it: for what need was there for our Saviour to declare, that the Seal of the Covenant should be apply'd to them, when 'twas never deny'd them? What need he bid them to initiate Infants, when 'twas never otherwise?

Indeed, if Infants had never had the Seal of the Covenant apply'd to them, it had been not only expedient, but necessary that our Saviour should have particularly nam'd them; and thereby declar'd his Intention of enlarging his Mercy and Favour to them: but Infants being ever included in it, and the Seal of the Promise being always apply'd to them, there could be no reason for giving them a new Title to what they were intated in before, or making particular mention of them who always enjoy'd it.

Yea, had Christ design'd that Children should not be any longer receiv'd into the Church, it had been necessary by an express Order to exclude them: for they having a former Grant of being admitted into Covenant, and being in actual possession of the Sign and Seal of it, there was a necessity of an express and direct Command to deprive them of it; and our Saviour must have declar'd, that whereas Children were formerly receiv'd into the Covenant by Circumcision, he now order'd the contrary, and would have none admitted into the Church by Baptism but grown Persons, who understand the Nature and End of it. But this being never done, yea, being inconsistent with the Mercy of the Gospel, which was rather to enlarge than straiten Favours, we may safely conclude that 'twas his Will to continue this Mercy to them; and none can without great Injustice and Cruelty deny it to them.

Furthermore, tho Infants are not expressly nam'd, yet they are plainly imply'd in the Commission of baptizing all Nations; for since the Universal includes all Particulars,

and Children make up a very considerable part of all Nations, the words of the Commission may be reasonably suppos'd to comprize them. Yea, our Saviour's words, *Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not*, with the Reason annex'd, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; amounts to little less than an exprefs Command for baptizing them: for the first step of coming unto Christ is by Baptism, neither can they have any Title to the Kingdom of Heaven without it; our Saviour himself declaring, *That except ye are born again of Water and the Spirit, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of God*. So that to exclude Children from Baptism, is to exclude them from Salvation, and to shut them out of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Christ expressely saith is theirs.

But here the Opposers of Infant-Baptism farther object, That Teaching in the Commission goes before Baptizing; for the words are, *Go, teach all Nations, baptizing, &c.* And therefore since Infants are not capable of Teaching they may not be admitted to Baptism. In answer to which I say,

1. That 'tis bad arguing from the order of words, or to infer from thence the necessary order and dependence of things; for these are many times promiscuously us'd in Holy Scripture. If St. *Matthew* puts Teaching before Baptizing, St. *Mark* puts Baptizing before Teaching, *Mark* 16. 4. So that this may serve either way, and therefore can conclude for neither.

2. The word μαθητεύσατε, render'd, *Teach all Nations* does not signify the actual Teaching but the making of Disciples, the entring them into Christ's School, or making them Members of his Church, and thereby putting them in a capacity of being taught afterwards: and therefore we find the word διδάσκοντες, which signifies the actual Teaching or instructing of Disciples, in the Commission to follow after Baptizing, in the next Verse; *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you*, *Mat* 28. 19, 20.

When Christ gave this Commission to his Apostles he sent them to convert rude and barbarous Nations to Christianity; and these being *Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, without God and without Christ in the World*, were first to be taught and instructed in the Mysteries of Religion, before they could be admitted into Christ's Church, which was the reason of putting Teaching before Baptizing.

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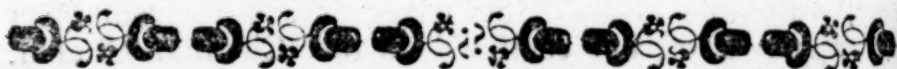
ing: But when any of these became Profelytes, and embraced the Christian Faith, their Children were baptiz'd with them; *The Promise* (as the Apostle declares) *being to them and their Children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* And these being receiv'd into the Church by the Faith of their Parents, were taught afterward the Knowledge of that Religion, into which they had the favour to be baptiz'd.

Accordingly we read, that tho *Abraham* was first taught, and then circumcis'd, yet by his being in Covenant, *Isaac* his Son was first circumcis'd, and then taught; and this was all along allow'd to the Children of Jewish Profelytes, who were ever receiv'd into Covenant, and afterward taught the meaning of it; which Custom our Blessed Saviour, who often enlarg'd, but never lessen'd, Favours, not only approv'd of, but continu'd in the Christian Church. So that still if any that are Jews, Turks, or Infidels, desire to be admitted into it, they are first to be taught and instructed in the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and then be receiv'd to Baptism: and being so, their Children have a right of admission to it, and must after learn and observe the Conditions of it. So that the Sense of our Saviour's words is plainly this; Teach them that are capable of Teaching, and baptize them that are capable of Baptizing.

But if any doubt arise in this matter, the Practice of the Catholick Church hereupon may be justly reputed the best Interpreter: And here we shall find the baptizing of Infants, by uninterrupted Tradition and Practice deriv'd down to us through every Age. The antient Constitutions of the Church expressly require it; the Fathers generally practis'd and enjoyn'd it: yea, *St. Cyprian*, with a Council of sixty six Bishops determin'd, that Infants had better Right to Baptism than elder Persons. The Council of *Milevis* pronounc'd an Anathema against all Persons who deny'd Baptism to Infants for the Remission of Sins. All Antiquity affirms, that the Apostles taught the Baptizing of Children; and this has been the universal Practice of the Church in all Times and Places ever since: which Custom obtains still every where, save with a giddy upstart Sect, who have been unhappily misled into the contrary Persuasion, by the cunning Craftiness of some who lie in wait to deceive.

But the greatest Objection against Infant-Baptism is yet behind, taken from their Incapacity of promising or performing the Conditions of it; which being the main thing intended in this Question and Answer, must be more fully handled in the next.

In the mean time we may learn hence the Sinfulness of neglecting this Holy Ordinance, confirm'd by the Command of Christ, the Example of his Apostles, and the Practice of the whole Catholick Church: and likewise the danger of depriving Infants of this gracious Institution, so beneficial to them, so comfortable to their Parents, and so great a Security to Religion itself, and all that enter upon it.



DISCOURSE IX.

MARK xvi. 16.

He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

HAVING, from this and other Places of Scripture, prov'd Faith and Repentance to be the necessary Conditions of Baptism, the next Question was, *How Infants come to be baptiz'd, when by reason of their tender Age they cannot perform this?* This is indeed the Grand Objection of the Anabaptists, who affirm Infants incapable of Baptism, because they are incapable of promising and performing the Conditions requir'd in it.

To this the Answer of the Catechism is, that tho they cannot engage these things for themselves, yet *they promise them both by their Sureties; which Promise, when they come to Age, themselves are bound to perform.* Where for the better explaining the Words, both of our Text and Catechism, it will be necessary to shew,

First, What that Faith is which is necessary to go before Baptism, and is made a Condition of it.

Secondly, That Infants are reckon'd in the Number of the Faithful, by the Faith of their Parents.

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Thirdly, That Infants may and do promise the Conditions of Baptism by their Sureties, who present and undertake for them.

Fourthly, That this Promise made by others in their behalf, does after lie upon themselves to perform.

These things rightly understood, will be sufficient to solve and remove this Difficulty. To which end I must enquire,

First, What that Faith is which is made a necessary Condition of Baptism; for our Blessed Saviour here puts Believing before Baptizing, and makes both the necessary Requisites to Salvation; *He that believeth* (says he) *and is baptized, shall be saved*: Where believing is made a Qualification to Baptism, and by that for Salvation. So that to deny to all Infants all sorts of Faith, is to exclude them from Salvation, and to doom them (if they die before they come to Years of Discretion) to Eternal Damnation: for *without Faith 'tis impossible to please God; and he that believeth not shall be damned*.

To clear then this Point, we must distinguish between an Actual and Potential Faith; that is between a Faith that may be presently exercis'd, and a Faith that is only in the Power, and may come into Act after. For as Children may be styl'd rational Creatures as soon as they are born, tho they have not the use or actual exercise of Reason at that Age, because they have the Principle of Reason within them, which may appear after: even so may Children be said to have some sort of Faith, tho it do not presently shew itself, because they have the Root of it within them, from whence it may afterward spring. Now adult or grown Persons, both Jews and Gentiles, of whom our Saviour speaks, were actually to believe and declare their Faith in Christ before they were to be baptiz'd; and therefore we read, that before *Philip* would baptize the Eunuch, he ask'd him whether he did believe with all his heart? And upon his Answer, that he believ'd Jesus to be the Son of God, he immediately baptiz'd him, *Acts* 8. 37. From which Instance, the Church ever after exacted from all grown Persons an actual Profession of their Faith before Baptism, and made every baptiz'd Party, if of Age, to repeat the whole Creed. But when these new Converts had embrac'd and own'd the Christian Faith, and so were receiv'd to Baptism, their Children, to whom the Promise likewise extended, were admitted to it without this actual Exercise

of their Faith: Which being unable to do in their tender Years, they were to learn and declare it afterwards; for God is not so hard a Master, as either to exclude Infants of believing Parents from the Method of Salvation, or exact that from them which they are unable to perform. And therefore these words of our Saviour, that mention Believing before Baptism, are to be understood only of grown Persons converted from Judaism or Heathenism to Christianity, who were both able and required to make a Profession of their Faith, into which they desir'd to be baptiz'd; but are not to be interpreted to bar Infants, who are neither able nor requir'd to make it. For as those words of the Apostle, *If any will not work, let him not eat*, exact indeed Work and Labour from all able and grown Persons in order to their Maintenance; yet may not be construed to starve Children, because they cannot work: so those words of our Saviour *He that believeth, and is baptiz'd, shall be saved*, require an actual Faith before Baptism, in those that are of Years and Ability to exercise it; but do not exclude Infants of the Benefit of it, before they are of Age to perform it. But,

Secondly, Tho Infants are incapable of exercising an Actual Faith, yet they are in Scripture reckon'd in the number of the Faithful by the Faith of their Parents. For as the Seed of *Abraham*, under the Old Dispensation, were taken into the Covenant by the Faith of their Father *Abraham* in whom all the Nations of the World were promis'd to be blessed: so the Apostle assures us, that under the New Testament, the Promise is still to them and their Children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call; who are therefore styl'd an Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood, a Chosen Generation, by descending from their Loins: and being so, they have undoubtedly a Right to the Seal of the Covenant, now as well as ever, by their descent from them. We know Children, by the Charters and Grants of Princes, are intitled to many temporal Favours and Privileges in right of their Parents. If a Father be free of any Town or Corporation, the Son is so too, and is by Birth intitled to the Privileges of a Freeman: *I was free born* (says St. Paul) and thereby he claim'd the Privileges of a Roman; and may not a Child born of Christian Parents, as well claim the Privileges of a Christian, especially when the Grant is made to them? Must Spiritual Favours be more restrain'd than Temporal? Is Christ's Charter to his Church to be

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made narrower than a Prince's Charter to a Corporation? Or are Children less capable of Spiritual, than of Temporal Immunities? Certainly, Christ's Bowels of Mercy and Kindness are not to be thought straiter than those of Princes: and if the merciful Grants of earthly Kings are extended to Infants, sure the Commission granted by Christ for the discipling all Nations, must be suppos'd much more to include them. Neither may this be deny'd to the Issue of believing Parents, to whom the Promise is made, who must be therefore in a better Condition than the Off-spring of Heathens. As for Faith and Repentance, the two Conditions of Baptism, I say,

Thirdly, That tho Infants cannot ingage these in their own Persons, yet they may and do promise them both by their Sureties who undertake for them.

Concerning the Lawfulness, Use and Benefit of these Sureties, enough hath been said in the first Part; all that need to be added here is, to shew the Ingagement of these Sureties in the behalf of Infants, to be sufficient to qualify them for the Grace of Baptism. To which end, two things must be here clear'd and consider'd by us.

1. That Children are capable of the Benefits of the Covenant. And,

2. That Sureties have been ever allow'd them, to render them capable of these Benefits.

1. That Infants are capable of the Benefits of the Covenant, their Reception into it by God's especial Order and Appointment, is a sufficient Evidence; for we find him declaring unto *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 7. *I will establish my Covenant between thee and me, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an Everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy Seed after thee.* And lest this Seed of his should be interpreted only of grown Persons descended from him, 'tis expressly order'd, ver. 10, 11, 12. That Infants of *Eight days old should be taken into the Covenant, and receive Circumcision as the Seal and Token of it.* Neither hath the Gospel restrain'd this Favour by excluding Infants, but enlarg'd it rather to *all Nations*, and the *Children of as many as the Lord our God shall call.* 'Tis well known, that Children are capable of having any thing convey'd and seal'd to them, upon Conditions to be perform'd; they may have a beneficial Grant or Lease made to them, and a Child may be crown'd in the Cradle: And if these tem-

poral Blessings appertain to them, why should spiritual Favours, of which they stand in greater need, be deny'd to them?

Now the three great Benefits of the Covenant, are Remission of Sin, Regenerating Grace, and a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven; of all which, Children must be suppos'd capable, unless we will exclude them from all hopes of Salvation. For the first, If Children are capable of Guilt, which they derive from our first Parents, they must of Remission too, or else their Condition is hard and remediless. We know, as the Infant Son of a Traitor may have his Blood tainted, and thereby lose all Right to his Father's Lands; so by the Mercy and Pardon of the Prince, may the Attainder be remov'd, and he restor'd to the forfeited Inheritance of his Father: in like manner, as the Guilt of *Adam's* Transgression is entail'd upon his Posterity, by which Infants are born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath; so by the Mercy of God may this guilt be remitted to them, and they receiv'd again into Grace and Favour.

As for Regenerating Grace, that is both promis'd and confer'd upon them, who *are sav'd by the washing of Water, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* To deny Infants this new Birth of Water and the Spirit, is to deny them all Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; which not only betrays great lack of Charity, but expressly contradicts the Words of our Saviour, who tells us that *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Children then are capable of spiritual as well as temporal Favours. But yet,

2. Because of their tender Years and Inability to promise or perform the Conditions of them, they have ever been allow'd Sureties and Undertakers for both, to render them capable of them. All Nations allow Children Guardians to contract for them in Temporal Matters, which Contracts being for their behoof and benefit, are good in Law, and bind them as firm as if they were their own Act; so that Children may be bound by Deeds drawn up and seal'd by others in their behalf, before they understand any thing of it: Yea, in Construction of Law, that is reckon'd an Act of the Pupil or Minor, that is done in his name, or for his good, by his Tutor or Guardian. In like manner, the Mercy of God and the Church hath allow'd Infants Sureties or spiritual Guardians to contract for them in spiritual Matters, and to do that for them for the good of their Souls, which they cannot do for themselves; which

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which Contract being made in their name and for their good, is look'd upon and accepted by God as their Act. And therefore,

Lastly, As they receive the Benefit of this Promise made in their behalf, so does it lie upon them to perform and fulfil the Conditions of it. A Minor cannot retract that when he comes of Age, which was engag'd for him by his Guardians in the time of his Infancy; but stands oblig'd to make good what was promis'd for him, if it appear to be for his welfare and benefit. If he receive a Lease or Gift upon certain terms engag'd by others in his stead, he must perform the Conditions, or forfeit all Title to it. Children are receiv'd into the Covenant by the Promise of these Sureties, and have Grace confer'd upon them on the Conditions of Faith and Repentance to be perform'd by them when they become able. These then lie upon them to perform, or else they justly lose all the Benefit and Privileges of this Ordinance: for tho the Favour of God and the Church dispense with these Conditions whilst they remain impossible, yet both exact them from them as soon as they become possible, and are able to perform them; insomuch, that if they fail of them when they come of Age, they prove false to their Engagements, and may be properly said to break a Vow and Covenant, if they sin against them. In short then, as no Incapacity debar'd Infants of old of the Benefit of Circumcision, so neither may it exclude them now from the Advantages of Baptism; the Mercy of the Gospel being greater and wider than that of the Law, and the Promises and Conditions of the Covenant being the same in both.

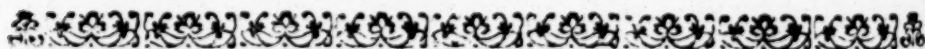
Thus we see upon what firm ground the Doctrine of Infant-Baptism stands, being supported by the Command of God under the Old Testament, by the Encouragement and Practice of Christ and his Apostles under the New, by the Custom and Constitution of the Christian Church ever since.

I shall conclude this Point with an Inference or two by way of Application: And,

I. We learn hence the great Love of God to tender Infants, in taking them so early into Covenant with himself, being to them a Father, and they to him as Children: And because they cannot engage for themselves what is necessary to bring them into this happy State, he is graciously pleas'd to accept the Engagement of others in their stead, fulfilling his

his part of the Covenant presently, by extending his Grace and Favour to them, and expecting the performance of theirs when they are able. This is an Instance of his fatherly Care and Tenderneſs to theſe helpleſs Babes; which is a great Security to them, and may afford no ſmall Comfort to their Parents, whether they live or die.

2. We learn hence the Danger of omitting or reſuſing this Ordinance, which is to reject the Kindneſs of Heaven to Babes and Sucklings, and to deprive them of the ordinary Way and Means of Salvation. We read how *Moses* was threatned with Death, and like to be deſtroy'd by an Angel, for omitting to circumciſe his Child; which made *Zipporah* perform it in an unuſual way to prevent the Danger, throwing the Foreskin in his Face, and ſaying, *A bloody Husband art thou to me becauſe of the Circumciſion*; that is, for neglecting of it. And if ſo great a Punishment attended the Breach of this Command under the Law, of how much ſorer Punishment ſhall they be thought worthy, who neglect this more eaſy Inſtitution of the Goſpel? Wherefore let none ſlight this Holy Ordinance, or reſuſe to bring their Children to it, when they are ſo lovingly call'd and invited to it, nor go about to ſtraighten thoſe Bowels of Mercy that yearn towards them; but rather thankfully accept thoſe Tenders of God's Love to poor Infants, and dedicate them betimes to him who hath promis'd to receive them.



DISCOURSE X.

1 COR. xi. 24 latter part.

This do in Remembrance of me.

HAVING ſhew'd the Nature and Neceſſity of Baptiſm, the firſt Sacrament of the New Teſtament, by which we are enter'd into the Chriſtian Church, and admitted to all the Benefits and Privileges of it; I proceed now to that

Other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by which we are continu'd and confirm'd in it. To this we are led by the next Queſtion in the Catechiſm, which asks,

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Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordain'd?

The Answer whereunto is, *For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits we receive thereby.* Of which I shall treat from these words, *Do this in remembrance of me:* where we have,

1. The Institution of this Holy Sacrament, *Do this;* which the foregoing words shew to be the celebrating of the Lord's Supper.

2. We have the great End and Design of it, which was in remembrance of our Saviour.

Of the Institution and Necessity of this Sacrament, we have spoken already: That which is here inquir'd into, and comes now to be handled, is the End and Design for which it was instituted, viz. *for the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and the Benefits we receive thereby.* In treating whereof, with relation both to the Text and the Catechism, it will be necessary to shew,

First, That the Death of Christ was truly a Sacrifice.

Secondly, That this ought to be had in continual Remembrance.

Thirdly, That the Benefits accruing by it, ought not to be forgotten. And,

Lastly, That the observing of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the best means of preserving the Memory of both. Of each of these something distinctly. And,

First, The Catechism and the Text suppose the Death of Christ to be truly and properly a Sacrifice. A Sacrifice, in its proper Notion, is the offering up something unto God by way of Atonement and Satisfaction for another. Thus all the Sacrifices under the Law consisted in the substituting or slaying something in the room or for the rescue of another. Now to a perfect Sacrifice three or four things were absolutely necessary, all which eminently concur'd in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ. As first it was necessary that the thing offer'd up should be pure, sound, and unblemish'd; for so we read, Lev. 22. 20. *Whatsoever hath a Blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be accepted for you.* It was not to be blind or broken, scurvy or scabby, but perfect, sound and intire, without Wen, or natural Imperfection; as we read in the following Verses. Accordingly the Paschal Lamb, which was a Type of this great propitiatory Sacrifice, was to be without Blemish and without Spot.

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Now this pure and spotless Innocence was eminently found in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, for he was perfectly free from all natural and moral Blemishes: *He did no Sin* (saith the Apostle) *nor was any Guile found in his mouth.* And therefore the same Apostle tells us, *That we were not redeem'd with such corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot.* That this was necessary to his being a full, perfect, and all-sufficient Sacrifice, is evident, because had he been a Sinner himself, he had deserv'd Death on his own score, and the utmost Effect of his Sacrifice had been only the Expiation of his own Guilt; neither would it have been possible for him to ransom the forfeited Lives of others, if by his own Sin he had forfeited his own to Divine Justice. And therefore *such a High Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens, who needed not first to offer Sacrifice for his own Sins;* as we read, *Heb. 7. 26, 27.*

2. 'Twas farther requir'd to a perfect Sacrifice, that the Thing offer'd should be of Value or Worth enough to make Compensation for the Punishment due to the Offender; for else it could neither answer the End, nor secure the Authority of the Law: And herein the Imperfection of all the legal Sacrifices was chiefly seen, that what was offer'd in them came far short of the Guilt for which they were offer'd; for they only substituted the Life of a Beast in the room of the Life of a Man, between which there is no proportion: And therefore the Apostle declares, *That 'twas impossible for the Blood of Bulls or of Goats to do away Sin;* their Death being not of sufficient Value to atone for the Sin and Punishment due to Man.

But the Death of Christ, who was God as well as Man, had an infinite Worth and Value in it; his Life was worth all the World, and his Death had Merit enough to atone for the Sins of all Mankind.

3. Another thing requir'd to a proper Sacrifice, was to be free and voluntary: Hence we find it commanded, *Lev. 1. 3.* *That he that offers any Sacrifice, should do it of his own voluntary Will, at the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.* It was not to be forc'd or extorted, but to come freely from the Offerer, who being sensible of his Guilt, and obnoxious to Punishment, should be ever ready and willing to make Expiation. This properly likewise was eminently

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eminently found in the Sacrifice of Christ's Death: for tho he were perfectly innocent himself, and so could not, consider'd as such, deserve to be punish'd upon his own score; yet having freely taken our Sin upon him, and voluntarily undertook to be our Surety, he might and did freely suffer. He had the disposal of his own Life, having power to lay it down, and likewise to take it up: so himself declares, John 10. 18. *No Man taketh my Life from me, but I lay it down of myself*; which he did as a Ransom for many.

Lastly, To complete the Sacrifice, 'twas necessary that what was offer'd should be admitted and receiv'd in the stead of the Offender; without which it could have no effect towards the Expiation of his Sin, or removing the Punishment due to it: For the Law requiring that he that sins should suffer, another's suffering can be of no avail, unless it be accepted as an Atonement of the Offender's Guilt. This was likewise found in the Death of Christ; for tho God might justly exact the Punishment of Sin from the Persons that committed it, yet he was graciously pleas'd to admit of a Surety to suffer in their stead: And as God the Son gave his Life a Ransom for many, so did God the Father accept of it as a sufficient Expiation; which made the Death of Christ a proper and perfect Sacrifice. From whence I proceed to shew,

Secondly, That this Sacrifice of the Death of Christ ought to be had in continual remembrance, which is the Sense of these words of our Saviour, *Do this in remembrance of me*. Indeed, all great and worthy Actions are to be kept in remembrance, especially those that signally promote the Good and Welfare of Mankind. The Psalmist tells us, that *God Almighty hath so done his wonderful Works, that they ought to be had in remembrance*, Psal. 111. The Lives and Deaths of publick Benefactors to Mankind have been ever recorded with Honour, and the Memory of them transmitted to future Generations: And if the noble Acts of Patriots and Preservers of our Country have been thus remember'd with Renown, how much more ought the Saviour of the World to be had in everlasting Remembrance? This is what he not only deserves, but desires here of all his Followers, that they would remember him when he was gone, and not forget the great things that he hath done and suffer'd for them. We find the Jews were commanded
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to preserve the Memory of their signal Deliverance out of *Egypt*; and a Day of Memorials was appointed to keep in mind the destroying Angel's passing over the Houses of the *Israelites*, when the *Egyptians* were all smitten with the Pestilence, *Exod. 12.* And if these temporal Mercies and Deliverances were thought worthy to be remember'd to all Generations; sure an Eternal Deliverance from the Powers of Death and Hell will deserve a more lasting Memorial. The Blood sprinkled on the Doors of the *Israelites*, is not half so memorable and medicinal, as the Blood of Christ shed and sprinkled on our Souls: The former only sav'd their Bodies from the Plague, whereas the latter saves our Souls from eternal Destruction. And what Monument can be great enough to preserve the Memory of so eminent a Blessing? If any should redeem our Bodies from Bondage or Captivity, or rescue our Lives from imminent Death and Danger, we could not but think ourselves for ever oblig'd to remember it; and might justly be branded for Monsters of Ingratitude, if we forgot such remarkable Acts of Kindness. Why, Christ hath ransom'd our Souls from a worse than *Egyptian* Bondage or *Turkish* Slavery: He hath sav'd our Life from Death, and by shedding his own Blood hath preserv'd ours: And are these things to be forgotten by us? Will not such Love constrain us to remember him, and not to suffer such memorable Acts of Kindness to sink into Oblivion? Indeed, 'tis but a slender Requital of his inestimable Love only to remember it, and to keep in mind those bitter Sufferings of his for our sake, which we should have for ever endur'd in our own Persons. And since this is all he calls for, we must be prodigiously ungrateful to deny him this, when we receive so many great and invaluable Benefits by it. And this will lead us to shew,

Thirdly, That not only the *Sacrifice of the Death of Christ*, but the *Benefits we receive thereby*, are to be minded and remember'd by us. What these Benefits are, the Catechism will after declare: In the mean time I shall here mention two, that are common to this with the other Sacrament; and they are Remission of Sins, and Reconciliation with our Maker: both which are convey'd and begun in Baptism, and after confirm'd and completed in the Lord's Supper.

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For the Remission of Sins, the Holy Scripture frequently informs us, that as Christ died for our Sins, so is the Pardon of them sign'd and seal'd to us in this Sacrament: so our Saviour here expressly declares, that *his Blood was shed for many for the Remission of Sins*. Because *Death was the Wages of Sin, and without shedding of Blood there is no Remission*; therefore our Saviour, as our Surety, was content to die and shed his Blood for us, that he might be our all sufficient Sacrifice and Atonement. And when Sin, the only Makebate between God and us, is remov'd, then are we receiv'd into Favour, and reconcil'd unto him; both which are effected by this Sacrifice, and are remember'd in this Sacrament: for our Sins are bury'd in his Grave, and *we that were afar off, are brought nigh by the Blood of his Cross*. These are memorable and unrequitable Mercies, and therefore ought to be had in continual remembrance; which is the great Business and Design of this Sacrament. And this will lead us to the

Last Thing propounded, viz. That receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the best means of preserving the Memory of Christ's Death, and conveying to us the Merit and Benefits thereof. It hath been observ'd in all Ages, that the Memory of any Person or Thing is by no way better preserv'd, than by Feasts and Festival Solemnities: Hence we find that God Almighty appointed the Feast of the Passover, to keep in mind the *Israelites* Deliverance out of *Egypt*, as also the destroying Angel's passing over the Houses of the *Israelites*, when he slew all the First-born of the *Egyptians*, and their passing safe thro' the Red Sea, which drown'd *Pharaoh* and all his Host: This Feast they were commanded to keep every Year, to preserve the Memory of these remarkable Mercies. They were to eat the Paschal Lamb with bitter Herbs, in memory of their hard Bondage in *Egypt*, which made their Lives bitter to them: And likewise with unleavened Bread, in token of that Bread of Affliction with which they were there fed; and by this the distinguishing Love of God to them was had in continual remembrance. Sutable hereunto, we find the *Grecians*, *Romans*, and other Nations, instituted Feasts and Festival Solemnities to preserve the Memory of their Heroes; at which times they were wont to rehearse their noble Acts in the Ears of the People, the better to imprint them in their Minds, and continue the Remembrance of them.

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In compliance with this antient and laudable Practice, our blessed Saviour instituted a Feast in memory of himself: and to preserve the Remembrance of his Goodness, he chang'd the Jewish Passover, which continu'd to his time, into the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; to perpetuate his Memory, and preserve the Remembrance of the greatest Deliverance that was ever wrought for the Sons of Men: for all other Deliverances were only from bodily Evils and temporal Calamities, whereas this was from ghostly Enemies and everlasting Death, and that by undergoing Death for us. And shall we turn our backs upon a Feast instituted by the Founder of all our Happiness, merely to remember him, and convey to us the Benefits of his Death and Sufferings? *Christ our Passover is sacrific'd for us* (saith the Apostle) *therefore let us keep the Feast*, 1 Cor. 7. 7. which is what our Saviour calls upon us to *do in remembrance of him*. But how are we to remember him, and the Benefits we receive by him in this Feast ordain'd for that purpose? Why, this is to be done not barely by an historical Remembrance that he lived and died, or having a cold and dead Image of these things in our mind; but by a lively Sense and Impression of them upon our Hearts, and stirring up Affections suited to such a Solemnity: for to remember, in Sacred Writ, is an Act not of the Mind only, but of the Will and Affections; 'tis one of those hearty words that implies the Motion of all the Powers of the Soul, and influences the whole Man. So that to remember our Saviour in this Sacrament, is to conceive a Hatred to all Sin, which was the Cause of his Sufferings, and to abhor the Practice of so vile a thing: 'Tis to cherish a hearty Love to him, who hath loved us to the Death, and to imitate it by an unfeigned Love to the Brethren, *walking in Love as he also hath loved us*. This is *to keep the Feast*, not with the *Leaven of Pride*, which is apt to puff up, nor with the *Leaven of Malice and Wickedness*, which sour Mens Minds against one another; but with the *unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*. In a word, we are so to remember Christ's Death, as to be deeply affected with the sense of it; to apply to ourselves the Merits and Virtue of it, to return our hearty thanks for it, and to express it in the whole course of our Conversation.

To conclude then, This being the great End of our Saviour in this Ordinance, let us not disappoint him in it, either by a careless Neglect or an unworthy receiving of it; but

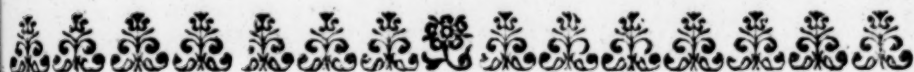
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but rather let us embrace all Opportunities of honouring and celebrating his Memory. 'Twas our Saviour's last dying Request, as well as Command, to *do this in Remembrance of me*; and if the last Words of dying Friends are wont to leave a deep Impression, let us not forget this Request of our dying Saviour.



DISCOURSE XI.

MAT. xxvi. part of Vers. 26, 27, 28.

Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, Take eat, this is my Body: And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood.

IT hath been before observ'd, that a Sacrament consists of two Parts, *viz.* An outward visible Sign, and an inward spiritual Grace: and having shew'd both these in the Sacrament of Baptism, I come now to shew the same in this of the Lord's Supper; to which we are directed by the next Question in the Catechism, in these words,

What is the outward Part or Sign in the Lord's Supper? The Answer whereunto is, *Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.* Where we have;

1. The outward visible Sign, and that is *Bread and Wine*; and,

2. Our Saviour's Appointment of them in this Sacrament, *which the Lord hath commanded to be receiv'd.* Both these are held forth to us in these words of the Evangelist: *Jesus took Bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples; likewise also he took the Cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them.* There are the outward Sign or Elements of Bread and Wine. *Take eat, this is my Body, and drink ye all of this, this is my Blood:* There is the Lord's Command for the receiving of them. In treating of both these, I must observe,

First, The Fitness of these Elements of Bread and Wine to the Purposes for which they were ordain'd.

Secondly, The preparatory Actions of our Saviour about them, to render them effectual: And,

Thirdly, The Appointment of them in this Sacrament. For the

First, If it shall be ask'd, why Bread and Wine were made choice of by our Saviour before any other Viands? Tho' the Word and Will of God, which ought to be our Law, be a sufficient Answer to such Enquiries, and may silence all such nice and curious Questions; yet there were other great and weighty Reasons, that might incline him to these things: As,

1. Because these were us'd before in the Feast of the Passover, of which Christ and his Disciples frequently partook. 'Tis most certain not only from the Holy Scriptures, but many Jewish Writers, that Bread and Wine were a part of the Passover-Supper, which is therefore often styl'd the *Feast of unleavened Bread*. Now our blessed Saviour, who never affected Novelties or Varieties, made no Alteration in this Matter, but only apply'd those Elements, before in use, to a higher and better Signification, as we shall see after. He was so far from giving any Encouragement to Innovations, that as he took every Sentence of his Prayer out of the Jewish Forms then in use, so he continu'd the same Provisions of Bread and Wine in his own Supper, that were before us'd in the Feast of the Passover, and only exalted them to a higher Memorial. He took away indeed the Paschal Lamb, which was only a Type of the Sacrifice of himself; who being the Lamb slain to take away the Sins of the World, the other ceas'd of course, and what was left in that Feast was consecrated and continu'd as a Memorial of his own Sufferings.

2. But beside this, the Symbols of Bread and Wine are proper and fit Emblems of this Divine Mystery, and the Benefits convey'd by it: for Bread is the most antient, constant, universal, and necessary Sustenance of Mankind, and Wine the greatest Cordial and Restorative of our feeble Nature; and therefore are both fit Parts of this heavenly Banquet.

We find *Melchisedeck* brought Bread and Wine to *Abraham*, as part of the Blessing bestow'd by that High Priest

and as a Signification of that Sacrament which *Abraham's* Seed was to receive from the High Priest to come after his Order; which, with what hath been said of the Passover, shews them to be very antiently us'd in Sacrifice.

Again,

3. These things were constantly us'd at Feasts, and never omitted in all Festival Solemnities; and therefore are very fit to represent and attend this Heavenly Feast. Moreover,

These Creatures of Bread and Wine are not only of continual, but universal Use. Bread is the poor Man's Food, and is necessary also for the Rich: 'Tis the Staff of Life, and necessary to the Support of all. The Psalmist tells us, that *Bread strengthens Man's Heart*, Psal. 104. 5. And elsewhere we read of Wine, *that it cheers the Heart of God and Man*; and therefore they are lively Emblems of the Divine Love, and represent the Sacred Dainties of this spiritual Repast. They both spring from the Earth, to mind us of our Original, whence we came, how we subsist, and to what we must return; and thereby teach us to mix Humility with our Praises and Thanksgivings. To all which we may add, that Bread and Wine best answer to those things, to which our blessed Saviour frequently compares himself: We find him often styling himself, *The Bread of Life*, and *that living Bread that came down from Heaven*, to save the Life of the World; and therefore is fitly represented by that Element, to which he delighted to liken himself. Again, we find him often calling himself a Vine, *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches*, John 15. 1. shewing how we are ingrafted into him, as Branches into the Stock, and derive all Sap and Nourishment from him. And consequently he is aptly represented by Wine, the Fruit of the Vine, and is fitly remember'd by us in the Blood of the Grape.

In short, there are many other Resemblances in the Nature, Qualities, and Virtue of Bread and Wine, that occasion'd our Saviour's making choice of them as the most proper Food in this Sacrament, being the fittest Signs to set forth his Life and Death, and the best means to communicate to us the Benefits of them. From whence I proceed,

Secondly, To consider the sundry preparatory Actions of our Saviour with respect to this Sacramental Bread and Wine,

Wine, to render it the more salutary and beneficial to us. And of these our Text mentions four or five, viz. his Handling, Blessing, Breaking, Distributing, and Consecrating them; which being particularly mention'd, must be particularly spoken to. And,

1. Our Text tells us, *He took Bread, and likewise after Supper he took the Cup*; which signifies not only his taking them into his Hand, but his lifting them up to be view'd and observ'd by all that were present, the better to stir up their Devotion, and elevate their Hearts unto him. In conformity to this Action, the Priest in the Celebration of this Sacrament is requir'd to take the Bread and Wine into his hand, and to lift them up in the sight of the People, that according to the Prophecy of Zachary, *they may look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn over him*: which made St. John say, *That which we have seen with our Eyes, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you*. From this Act of Christ's taking the Bread and handling the Cup, and thereby exhibiting both to Mankind, we may meditate on the infinite Goodness and Condescension of our Saviour, in so freely shewing and offering himself unto us. Next to his handling of these Elements, follows,

2. His Benediction of them, *He took Bread and blessed it; and likewise took the Cup, and gave thanks*. He would not enter upon the Administration of this Holy Sacrament, till he had blessed the Bread, and blessed God for it. Indeed, nothing is to be begun without this Invocation, because nothing can succeed without it: 'tis the Blessing of God that puts all the Virtue and Efficacy into any of his Creatures, and therefore that is to be invoc'd in all our Enterprizes. *Every Creature of God is good* (saith the Apostle) *if it be receiv'd with Thanksgiving*; and without that, none of his Creatures can yield any Good or Comfort to us. Our daily and common Bread cannot nourish without God's Blessing, neither can this Sacred Bread afford any Refreshment without the heavenly Benediction: And this made our Saviour to add his Blessing to these Elements, and sanctify both with Thanksgiving. And because this is a standing Ordinance in the Church of Christ, he hath empower'd and order'd his Ministers to do the same.

3. When he had blessed the Bread, he brake it; this is the next Act of our Saviour in this Scene of his Sufferings, where the breaking of the Bread betokens the breaking of his Body,

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Body, and the many Miseries he underwent in it; the pouring out the Wine represents the spilling of his Blood, *which was shed for many for the Remission of Sins*. And as these Actions of our Saviour were design'd to keep up the Memory of his Passion, so our beholding of them should call to mind the several Parts and Passages of that Tragedy; how he was bruised for our Transgressions, buffeted, spit upon, scourg'd, and at last crucify'd for our Iniquities. And as Corn must be thresh'd, winnow'd, broken, and ground, before it becomes Bread to feed us: so was Christ wounded, bruised, and exercis'd with Variety of Sufferings, before he became the Bread of Life to nourish us to eternal Life.

4. Next to the Blessing and Breaking of the Bread, follows the Distribution of it; *He gave it to his Disciples*. When Christ took Bread and blessed it, 'twas not to keep it or engross it to himself, but with a bountiful Hand to distribute and give it away; so we find him here dealing his Bread to the hungry: And of the Cup we read likewise, that when he had given thanks, he gave it to them all, thereby satisfying the thirsty Soul. Because *Man liveth not by Bread only*, but requireth Drink for his Sustenance, therefore our merciful High Priest here distributes both, to supply all our Necessities, and to shew himself an all sufficient Saviour; and of all Drinks he made choice of Wine, the fittest to represent his Blood, and to cherish ours. Thus he filleth those that hunger and thirst after Righteousness with his good things, and feedeth their Souls as with Marrow and Fatness, distributing the Bread of Life to all his Followers, and dealing about the Cup of Salvation to all that approach his Table: which farther shews us the infinite Love of Christ, in tending himself and all his Merits so freely to us.

Lastly, To complete all, follow the Words of Consecration, saying of the Bread, *This is my Body which was given for you*; and of the Wine, *This is my Blood that was shed for the Remission of Sins*. By which those Elements cease to be common Bread and Wine, and are turn'd, the one into the Bread of Life, and the other into a Potion of Immortality; and both feed our Souls to everlasting Life.

But this will fall more properly under the next Question of the Catechism, to which I therefore refer it.

Bread and Wine then are the outward Signs and Symbols of this Sacrament. But is it a matter of Indifference whether

we take them or no? No, the next words of the Catechism tell us, that *the Lord hath commanded us to receive them*: Which is the .

Third Thing propounded, viz. Our Lord's Appointment of these Signs to be receiv'd as the Memorials of himself. This Command is here plainly held forth in the latter part of our Text, where after he had blessed and broken the Bread, he gave it to his Disciples with this Charge, saying, *Take, eat, this is my Body*; and of the Cup, when he had given thanks, he said, *Drink ye all of this, &c.* Both which amount to an expresse Order of our Saviour to make use of both these consecrated Elements, eating the one, and drinking the other in remembrance of him. He having prescrib'd and presented to us a Remedy for the Diseases of our Souls, wills us to make use of it; *i. e.* when he had prepar'd the Medicine, he here bid us to *take it*; and having fill'd the Cup with a Cordial of his own Heart blood, gives a Command, *Drink ye all of it*: for as no Medicine can do any good, except it be apply'd, so neither can this heavenly Food be of any use to us, unless it be taken. By receiving of it, we not only pay our Duty and Homage to our Saviour, but receive from him all the Mercy and Merit of his Sufferings. In a word,

By taking in these Elements, we, in a manner, take Christ into us, becoming one Flesh with him, and being spiritually united to him; for so himself tells us, *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, abideth in me, and I in him*; John 6. 56.

But how are we to receive these Elements, that they may be effectual to these Ends? This must be known too, because 'tis not all receiving that will be available to these Purposes; for the Apostle speaks of some, who *by their unworthy receiving eat and drink their own Damnation*, 1 Cor. 11. 29. In answer then hereunto, I say,

1. We must receive these Sacred Viands with a spiritual Hunger and Thirst, longing for them as the proper Food and Nourishment of our Souls, coming to them with an Appetite, not looking on it as an indifferent thing whether we receive them or no, but led with strong Desires after them, and saying with the Psalmist, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God*: *O when shall I come and appear in the Presence of the Lord*!

2. We must receive this Divine Food with a due Sense of the infinite Love of God in providing it for us, and bestowing it upon us; that he would give us his Son first to die for us, and after to become our Food in this Sacrament.

3. We must receive it with a Sense of our own Want and Necessity of it; for 'tis this alone that can feed and nourish us to Eternal Life, and by withholding or neglecting of it, we must starve and perish to all Eternity.

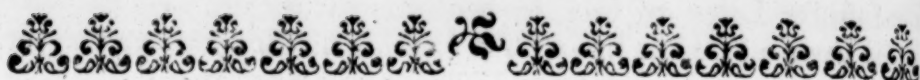
4. We must receive this spiritual Provision with Faith, and a firm Persuasion of receiving benefit by it; for Christ having appointed Bread and Wine in this Sacrament, as the Sign and Seal of his Covenant, thereby confirming and conveying his Blessings to us, we are to receive them as Pledges of his Love, and build our Hopes upon him.

5. We must receive these things with a holy Reverence and Attention of Mind, not looking on them as common Food, nor going to Christ's Table as to an ordinary Meal; for this is to profane this Ordinance by not discerning the Lord's Body: but esteeming it a Divine and Heavenly Entertainment, and addressing ourselves to it accordingly.

Lastly, we are to receive them with Prayer and Thanksgiving, which alone can bring down a Blessing upon them. This is the best way of digesting this Celestial Food, and turning it into the Substance and Nourishment of our Souls.

In short, We are to receive these Sacred Mysteries with Hearts full of Devotion and Charity, seriously minding the great End and Design of them, and having our Spirits affected with the things represented by them; that by such lively and lasting Impressions on the Mind, we may be enabled to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

Thus we see the outward visible Sign of this Sacrament, and how we are commanded to receive it: All that is to be added, is to exhort you to a careful and constant Participation of these Holy Mysteries. Let none reject this *Bread of Life that came down from Heaven*, and tends to lead us there; but rather say with the Apostles, *Lord evermore give us of this Bread*. Nor let any refuse this Cup of Salvation, mingled with the highest Cordial; but drink ye all of it, to preserve the Memory of your Saviour, and promote the Health and Welfare of your own Souls.



DISCOURSE XII.

LUKE xxii. part of the 19th and 20th Verses.

This is my Body which is given for you ; This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you.

ITreated in my last of the outward Part or Sign of the Lord's Supper, viz. *Bread and Wine*, which the Lord commanded to be receiv'd. I come now, as the Catechism directs, to the inward Part or Thing signify'd : which, we are taught to believe, is the *Body and Blood of Christ*, which are verily and indeed taken and receiv'd by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. Of this I shall discourse to you from these words of our Saviour in the Consecration of these Elements, *This is my Body, which is given for you ; and this is my Blood of the New Testament, which was shed for you.* In speaking to which, with relation to the Catechism, I must,

First, Shew in what sense the *Bread and Wine* are here said to be the *Body and Blood of Christ*.

Secondly, How they are said to be taken and receiv'd in this Sacrament, which is verily and indeed. And,

Thirdly, By whom they are so taken and receiv'd ; and that is by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper. For the

First, Great Differences have risen in the Christian Church about the Sense of these words, *This is my Body*, and *this is my Blood* ; that is, whether they are to be understood

Literally, of a Real Change into the very Substance of Christ's natural Body and Blood ; or only

Mystically, of a spiritual Change and Representation of them.

The Church of Rome, against all Sense and Reason, contends for the former, and has driven this matter so high,

as to define it for an Article of Faith, and to anathematize all that cannot so far renounce their Senses as to believe it; which hath unhappily forc'd a wide and miserable Breach in the Communion of the Catholick Church. And therefore, for the Satisfaction of well-meaning Christians, I shall observe to you a few things.

1. That as Bread and Wine were us'd in the Feast of the Passover, so was there a Form of Words us'd at the Consecration and Delivery of them, which (as the Jewish Writers tell us) was, *This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers did eat; and this is the Body of the Paschal Lamb, which is sacrific'd for you*: Which Expressions imply'd no real Change or Alteration in the Substance of the Bread or the Lamb, but were only us'd as Memorials of them. In like manner, our blessed Saviour, in imitation of their Customs, with which he frequently comply'd, us'd the like Form in celebrating his Supper, viz. *This is my Body, and this is my Blood, which were given and shed for you*: which words import no substantial Change of the Elements, but only that they are the Symbols and Representation of him.

2. St. Paul, who best knew his Master's Sense, frequently styles it Bread after the Consecration, calling it only the Communion of the Body of Christ: And the Fathers generally express it by the Symbol, Type, Figure, and Representation of his Body; which they would not do, if there were any such Transmutation of the Substance.

3. This Opinion contradicts all our Senses, in a matter whereof they are the proper Judges; for we see, and feel, and taste it to be Bread and Wine, and not Flesh, and Blood. We find our Saviour appealing to the Judgment and Testimony of Mens Senses, about the Truth and Reality of his Body, saying to his Disciples, *Handle me and see me, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have*; which would be of no force, if our Senses were not to be trusted. Yea, to destroy the Evidence of Sense, is to undermine the whole Christian Religion; for the Belief of it depends chiefly upon the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles for the Confirmation of it, of all which we can have no proof, if our Senses are not to be believ'd.

4. This monstrous Opinion contradicts all our Reason, as well as Senses: for 'tis contrary to the Nature and Properties of a Body, which being one and circumscrib'd, cannot be in many places at once; for that would make it not one

one Body, but many. It affirms Christ's Body to be broken, and yet whole and intire; which is to be broken and not broken at the same time. It contradicts the Nature of a Sacrament, where the outward visible Sign must remain to represent the inward spiritual Grace, as Water doth in Baptism. Beside, it makes all Christians Cannibals; yea, it makes Christ eat himself, and devour his own Flesh: And surely he must be a Man of a strange as well as strong Faith, who can swallow such Contradictions. And as this wild Notion contradicts all Sense and Reason, so,

5. It can have no Support from Revelation; for those words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*, may be no more taken in a literal sense, than those others, *I am a Vine, a Door, a Rock*, and the like; which signify indeed some Resemblance, but imply no Transmutation. Nor,

Lastly, is there any need of such a Transubstantiation of the Elements; all the Efficacy of Christ's Death being as well, if not better, represented and convey'd by a spiritual than a corporal feeding upon him.

It remains then, that we believe, as our Catechism teaches us, that the outward Elements of Bread and Wine are only Signs and Seals of Christ's Body and Blood; that they are not converted into, but convey to us the Benefits of them; for which reason they are often styl'd the Symbols, Types and Memorials of them.

But how are the Body and Blood of Christ taken and receiv'd in the Lord's Supper? That the next words of the Catechism, and our *Second Particular*, will inform us, viz. That they are *verily and indeed taken*: which words signify Christ to be really, tho not corporally present in this Sacrament.

This is the Doctrine of the Catholick Church in this particular, That Christ's Body and Blood are verily, that is, truly and really, yet spiritually taken in this Supper. They are indeed receiv'd, that is, in Truth and Reality, not in Fancy or Fiction, nor yet in symbolical Representations only, but in Deed and in Truth. Tho the Elements be not turn'd or chang'd into Christ's Substance, but remain still in Substance the same, yet every duly-disposed Communicant doth really receive Christ, and truly feed on him, in and by those Elements: and as surely as he takes in Bread and Wine, so surely does he take in the Body and Blood of Christ, and thereby become incorporated and

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united to him. So that there are two Extremes to be carefully avoided by all good Christians in this matter. For first,

Some from the frequent and lively Expressions of Scripture about eating Christ's Body and drinking his Blood, have heighten'd their Minds to too sensible and wrong Conceptions of these holy Mysteries, and strain'd them to a sublime, tho senseless Notion of Transubstantiation.

Others again have debas'd these Elements too low, and thought and us'd them as little better than common Food. The former is an Error proceeding from an Excess of Zeal; the latter from a Defect, or too great Lukewarmness.

Now our Church teaches us the middle way, which is commonly the right, between these Extremes, *viz.* not exalting them too high, by converting them into the very Substance of Christ's Body and Blood, nor depressing them too low, by denying the Real Presence of both, but affirming Christ to be truly and spiritually present in this Sacrament, and really communicating himself, and the Virtue of his Sufferings to us. In this spiritual and mystical sense, the Body and Blood of Christ are here said to be *verily and indeed taken and receiv'd in the Lord's Supper.*

But by whom are they said to be thus receiv'd? the Answer to this will lead me to consider the Persons by whom they are thus receiv'd; and that, we are here told, is *by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper*: 'tis not by all that approach to or handle these holy Mysteries; for the Apostle tells us of some that receive them unworthily, who instead of reaping any Benefit, become guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, and eat and drink their own Damnation, not discerning the Lord's Body. 'Tis the Faithful only that feed on Christ in this Sacrament; and as he is verily and indeed taken by them, so does *his Flesh* become to them *Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed.* Christ's Death is indeed offer'd to, and is sufficient for all Men; but 'tis effectual only to true Believers: *To as many as receiv'd him* (says St. John) *to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to those that believe on his Name*: John 1. 12. And therefore 'twas well said by one of the antient Fathers, The Food of this Sacrament to them that *believe, is the Body and Blood of Christ*; but to them that believe not, 'tis only *Bread and Wine*. So that two things are necessary to the effectual Participation of these Mysteries, *viz.* Knowledge to discern

discern the Lord's Body ; and Faith to receive and feed upon it as such.

1. Without some competent measure of Knowledge, we shall not discern the Lord's Body, that is, we shall not see what is couch'd under these Sacred Mysteries, nor distinguish this Divine Provision from common Bread ; and therefore we must be well instructed in the Nature, End and Use of these Elements, looking upon them as a Spiritual Banquet or Heavenly Entertainment, wherein Christ meets and communicates himself to us, signing and sealing his part of the New Covenant to us ; and we on the other hand sign and seal our Part and Duty unto him. By this we shall learn to shew forth Christ's Death ; and not only so, but to shew forth the Fruits and reap the Benefits of it.

And as Knowledge is necessary to help us to discern the Lord's Body, so,

2. Is Faith too, to enable us to receive and feed on him accordingly ; for without this we shall neither come to it with an Appetite, nor promote its Digestion. 'Tis not sufficient barely to take in and eat those Elements, or to be present as Guests at the Lord's Table ; but we must be duly qualify'd, and receive the outward Signs with an inward Faith, and a due Preparation. This is indeed necessary in all the Acts of Religion, but more especially so in this solemn Duty of Christianity ; wherein we come into God's more especial Presence, and are entertain'd by him with the heartiest Welcome, and the best Cheer ; and therefore should bring with us Dispositions of Soul suitable to such a Solemnity, that is, a sincere Love and a stedfast Faith : for the dearest Pledges of Divine Love will be of no avail to us, if not accompany'd with those Divine Graces ; without which, tho we may receive the Bread and Wine, yet 'twill neither prove the Bread of Life, nor the Cup of Blessing.

Thus we see both the outward Sign, and thing signify'd in this Sacrament, together with the Fitness and Usefulness of both to the End for which they were ordain'd : for Bread, we know, is the most common, wholesom, necessary and savoury of all Food ; and Wine is the most pleasant, cordial and reviving of all Liquors, and therefore the fittest to represent the Heavenly Provision of Christ's Table.

Again, we have seen what is held forth and convey'd by these things, *viz.* the Body and Blood of Christ, together with

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with the Manner how they become so to the worthy Receivers ; namely not by any real change of the Nature or Substance of those Elements, but only in their Significancy, Use, and Divine Efficacy.

Lastly, We have seen likewise the Persons to whom these Benefits belong, which are only the *Faithful in the Lord's Supper* : that is, such as firmly believe and apply to themselves the Virtue of Christ's Sufferings.

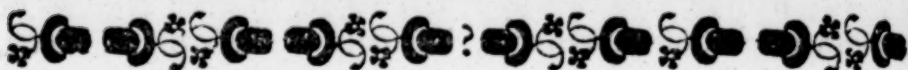
I shall shut up this with a word or two of Application.

1. Not to neglect the outward visible Signs : Nor,
2. To forget the inward Spiritual Grace represented by them ; but to retain a due Reverence and Observance of both.

For the First, there are but too many who live in a gross neglect of this Holy Institution : Some thro' Carelessness and Inadvertence, having no Fear of God before their Eyes : others thro' too much Timorousness and Superstition, fearing where no Fear is : both which, instead of drawing nigh to, turn their backs upon Christ's Table, refusing to taste of his Supper, and casting from them the Bread of Life. We read in the Gospel, of those that were invited to the *Marriage-Feast* of the King's Son, that many of them *made light of it, and went their way one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize* : Some absolutely refus'd to come, others made slight and frivolous Excuses ; but with both of them the King was wroth, and instead of sending other Messengers to invite them, sent only his Army to destroy them. Such and much worse will be the End of those that make light of Christ, and thrust Salvation from them.

In a word, We may all learn from hence, not to neglect these Sacred Mysteries, nor to rest in a careless and unworthy receiving of them ; but to keep up a becoming Regard and Observance of the outward Signs, and a due Veneration of the things signify'd by them.





DISCOURSE XIII.

PHIL. iv. 13.

I can do all things thro' Christ that strengtheneth me.

HAVING explain'd the Nature, End, and Design of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, together with the outward Signs us'd in it, and the inward Grace signify'd by it : I proceed (as the Catechism directs) to consider some of the many and great Benefits and Advantages of this Sacrament, which are here mention'd as an Inducement to the frequent use and participation of it. This the next Question and Answer will give us some account of ; where 'tis ask'd,

What are the Benefits whercof we are made Partakers thereby ?

To which the Answer is,

The strengthening and refreshing of our Souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine. Of this I shall treat from the Words read, *I can do all things thro' Christ which strengthens me.* They are the words of St. Paul, who elsewhere tells us, That he could do nothing, not so much as think a good Thought, and much less perform a good Action : and yet here he tells us, *that he can do all things*, nothing is too hard or impossible to him. How are these things to be reconcil'd ? Why, very well : He could do nothing of himself, or by his own Power and Strength, which is no better than Weakness ; but he could do all things, by the help of the Divine Power, or thro' Christ that strengthen'd him. In discoursing of which words, with respect to the Catechism, I must enquire

First, What is that Strength or Refreshment which our Souls are here said to partake of.

Secondly, From whence we receive it : which, the Text tells us, is thro' Christ ; the Catechism to the same effect, from the *Body and Blood of Christ.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, How our Souls are strengthen'd by them: *viz.*
as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine. For the

First, The Strength and Refreshment which our Souls are capable of, consist chiefly in these three things.

1. A Power of resisting Sin, and vanquishing the Temptations to it.

2. In an Ability of doing the Will of God, in a way acceptable and well-pleasing to him.

3. In a Delight in the sense of the Love and Favour of God, or being reconcil'd to him. These are the main, if not the only things that can fortify the Mind, or bring any ease or refreshment to it; and therefore must be briefly consider'd. And,

1. I say, The Strength of the Soul consists mightily in resisting Sin, and overcoming the Temptations to it. Tho' Sin be the Bane and Poison of the Soul, yet too many are easily persuaded to take it; yea, so besotted are they with the Love of this great Evil, as to be both unable and unwilling to resist it. The first Sin brought a Feebleness and Corruption upon all our Faculties, which by an habitual Course of actual Transgressions, become much impair'd. This is the Weakness of the Mind, which is hereby render'd a Slave to Sin, and a Vassal to vile Affections: Sin reigns in their mortal Bodies, and makes them obey it in the Lusts thereof; yea, it rules and domineers in the Soul, and carries it captive with every Temptation. Now the Strength of the Soul lies in subduing these sinful Lusts, and getting the Mastery of all inordinate Desires and Affections: this is what St. Paul pray'd for in the behalf of the *Colossians*, that God would strengthen them with Might in the inward Man; and St. Peter in the behalf of all Christians, that the God of all Grace would make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them; 1 Pet. 5. 10. meaning, that they might be not only establish'd in the Truth, but fortify'd against all their Enemies, becoming strong in the Lord, striving against Sin.

2. The Strength of the Soul consists not only in a Power of resisting Sin, but likewise in an Ability of doing our Duty, and performing the Will of God in a way well-pleasing to him. 'Tis true indeed, we cannot hope to come up exactly to our Duty, or to perform the whole Law, or Will of God; no, there is no Perfection in this Life, and in many things we offend all: But yet we may and ought to come

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as near it as we can, to do our utmost, and to yield a hearty and sincere Obedience, bewailing our past Failings, and watching against future Miscarriages. This is what God hath promis'd to accept of, and willed all Christians to pray and labour for, *giving all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure, and to work out their Salvation with fear and trembling*: They that do so, are said to *be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*, and to acquit themselves as the faithful Servants and Soldiers of Jesus Christ.

3. The strengthening and refreshing of our Souls implies farther a Complacence or Delight in God, arising from the Sense of his Love, or being reconcil'd to him: This is, indeed, the greatest ease and refreshment of our rational and immortal Soul, which nothing here below is able to please or satisfy; 'tis of a nobler Nature and Descent, than to feed upon Husks, or entertain itself with any earthly or sensual Satisfaction. Nothing but God and the things above are a suitable Portion for it, or can afford any agreeable pleasure to it: The Language of the Heaven-born Soul is like that of *David, whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever*, Psal. 73. 25, 26. His Favour is better than Life, and the Light of his Countenance puts more Gladness into the Heart, than the largest Increase of Corn, Wine, and Oil. When he hideth his Face we are troubled; and as the sense of Guilt sinks the Soul into Sorrow and Despair, so the sense of Pardon and Reconciliation with its Maker, raiseth it into Raptures of Joy and Rejoicing.

The strengthening then and refreshing the Soul, imply Power over Sin, an Ability of serving God, and an Interest in his Love and Favour: These are the proper good Things which the Soul stands in need of, and which it most of all desires. But,

Secondly, Whence hath the Soul this spiritual Strength and Refreshment? Why, our Text tells us 'tis thro' Christ: the Catechism more particularly, from *the Body and Blood of Christ*. St. Paul declares, that he could *do all things thro' Christ that strengthen'd him*: Meaning, as he elsewhere explains himself, that the Grace of God was sufficient for him, and help'd him to overcome all Difficulties; insomuch

that when he seem'd to be most weak, then was he *strongest*, and his Strength was made perfect in Weakness: by this he was enabled to subdue Sin, to vanquish Satan, to overcome the World, and to be *more than Conqueror over all these, thro' Christ that loved him.* Hence we find him triumphing over *Principalities and Powers, over the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and over spiritual Wickednesses in high Places.* Yea, we find him triumphing over Death and the Grave, defying the Sting of the one, and the Strength of the other; and thanking God for the Victory obtain'd over them, *thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15. 53.* And he that can do this, may do all things by such a Divine Power that strengthens him. Sin indeed weakens the Soul by alienating it from God, where all its Strength lies, and depriving it of the Assistance of his Grace, which is alone able to help it: *How weak is thine Heart* (says God) *seeing thou hast done these things?* Ezek. 16. 30. So that 'tis the Grace of God that strengthens and refresheth the Soul; and as we may be enabled to do all things with it, without it we can do nothing: this our Saviour told his Disciples, *John 15. 5. I am the Vine* (says he) *and ye are the Branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit, but without me ye can do nothing.* As the Branches live in the Vine, and bring forth fruit by the Sap they derive from it; so the Life that we live, is by the Faith of the Son of God; and 'tis by his Grace alone communicated to us, that we are enabled to bring forth any Fruit: and therefore Christ, in compassion to our infirmities, calls all that labour under the burden of Sin, and groan with the Sense of their own Weakness, to come to him for ease, and they shall find rest to their Souls, *Mat. 11.* Now,

Thirdly, This Spiritual Strength and Refreshment is (as the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism teach) deriv'd to us by the Body and Blood of Christ, which is that Divine Food that nourisheth and cherisheth to Eternal Life; by which he feeds the Hungry, and satisfies the thirsty Soul; he heals the wounded, pardons the Sinner, comforts the weak, and strengthens him against all his Enemies. A devout Father hath given us an Account of the deliciousainties prepar'd and set forth to us in this Supper of our Lord, in which he makes mention of Provisions, not only solid and strengthening, but sweet and refreshing, and likewise

wise medicinal and healing to all the Diseases of the Soul; and by these things invites all Christians, and provokes their Appetite to this Heavenly Cheer.

1st then, The Divine Food tender'd to us at the Lord's Table, serves to *the strengthening of the Soul*: and this it does partly by quickning and assisting all its Faculties, and partly by exercising and improving all its Graces.

As for the Faculties of the Soul, they are mightily rais'd and elevated by this Heavenly Cheer: The Understanding becomes more full and clear in all its Perceptions; the Will more free in its Operations and Tendency to Good; the Affections more lively and vigorous in all their Motions towards it. In a word, the whole Soul is hereby made more active, and inclin'd to the Choice and Love of the best things.

As for the Graces of the Soul, and particularly those three eminent ones of *Faith, Hope, and Charity*: these are mightily improv'd and augmented by this Gospel-Feast.

Faith is increas'd in it by the help of our Senses, for in this Holy Sacrament we see, and feel, and taste, that the Lord is gracious; we behold the Wounds of a crucify'd Saviour, and in a Manner thrust our Hands into his Side, which is enough to banish all our Doubts, and make us no longer *faithless, but believing*; this must make our Faith like that of St. *Thomas*, more lively and strong, and to cry out with him, *My Lord and my God*.

And as our Faith is confirm'd by this Holy Communion so is our Hope too in Proportion to it: this depends on and increases with that, for when we firmly believe the Truth of the Gospel, and the Things deliver'd in it, we shall patiently wait for the accomplishment of them, and comfortably expect the fulfilling of all the Promises. A Christian's Hope is nourish'd by his Faith; which being the Evidence of things not seen, sets him a longing and looking for them: this is *an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and steadfast*, that keeps it from wavering and warping from its Duty.

But above all, The excellent Grace of Charity is very much strengthen'd and increas'd by this Sacrament, and that in both its Branches, the Love of God and our Neighbour; for the lively Representation we there have of the Divine Love, must inkindle in our Breast the Love of God. *The Love of Christ constraineth us* (says the Apostle:) the

are those Cords or Charms in Love, that strongly draw and invite the Affections; neither doth any thing more inflame our Hearts, than the burning of another's towards us: This adds still new Fewel to the Fire, and keeps up a constant Flame of Love burning in our Souls towards God; and likewise knits us in the firm Bonds of Love and Affection to all our Brethren, who are all Members of Christ's Body, and for whom he was pleas'd to shed his own Blood: And *if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us*; 1 John 4. 12.

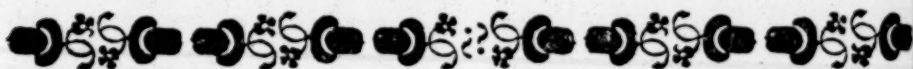
2dly, The Body and Blood of Christ given to us in this Sacrament, serve not only to the *strengthening*, but *refreshing* our Souls: for this is a Marriage-Feast, or a Feast of Love, which above all things cheers the Heart, and is accompany'd with the greatest Joy. The Body of Christ yields a more pure and permanent nourishment than any bodily Sustenance can afford; and his Blood is more cordial and reviving than the Blood of the richest Grape: which made the Spouse in the *Canticles* declare, that *his Love was better than Wine*, Cant. 1. 2. What can more ravish and transport the Soul, than to feast not only with, but upon the Son of God; and in a secret, spiritual, and wonderful manner become united to him? Which made the Church in the *Canticles* farther say, *We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy Love more than Wine*; Cant. 1. 4.

Lastly, The Divine Provision of this Feast, is not only strengthening and refreshing, but healing and medicinal to all the Diseases of the Soul; 'tis Physick as well as Food, and at once both feeds and heals. Christ's Flesh was given as a Sacrifice for us, and so is healing to our Souls, and killing to our Sins: His Blood was shed as an Expiation, and thereby at once purifies the Heart, and purges it from all Iniquity. So the Apostle tells us, *His Blood cleanseth from all Sin*, 1 John 1. 7. Hence we find our Saviour affirming, *his Flesh to be Meat indeed, and his Blood to be Drink indeed*, John 6. And justly too, since they answer all the Desires, cure all the Diseases, and serve all the Necessities of the Soul, and so are both Meat and Medicine

But how are our Souls thus strengthen'd and refresh'd by the Body and Blood of Christ? Why, that our Catechism tells us, is, *as our Bodies are by Bread and Wine*; that is by truly receiving and digesting of them: for as the whole-

someſt Food cannot nourish, unleſs taken in; nor the beſt Phyſick do any good, unleſs apply'd: ſo neither can the Body and Blood of Chriſt be of any uſe or benefit to us, except they are worthily receiv'd and digeſted by us. Bread, we know, is the Staff of our natural Life, and Wine ſerves to chear and revive the Spirits: In like manner, the Body of Chriſt is the Stay and Support of our ſpiritual Life, and his Blood cheriſhes to Life Eternal, and both by being duly receiv'd and apply'd to us.

Let none then neglect this Sacred Ordinance, nor ſlight the Heavenly Chear tender'd in it; which tends ſo much to the Health, Comfort, and Happineſs of our Souls. Beware of turning your backs upon the Holy Table, where theſe exquisite Dainties are ſerv'd up and offer'd to us, for that is to *trample under foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant, by which we are ſanctify'd, an unholy thing*; which is not only a great Indignity to our Saviour, but a vaſt Injury to our own ſelves: for ſince there is *no other Sacrifice for Sin, how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* But rather let us hunger and thirſt after this Sacred Food, being ever ready to *do this*, as in remembrance of our Saviour, ſo for the Relief of our own Souls.



DISCOURSE XIV.

I COR. xi. 28.

Let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.

I Shew'd in my laſt, ſome of the many and great Benefits that accrue from the worthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper, which are enough to quicken our Appetite and help our Digefſtion of that Celeſtial Food. But becauſe ſomething is requir'd on our part to be made partakers of them, I come now, as the laſt Queſtion in the Catechiſm directs, to enquire, *What is requir'd of them that come to the Lord's Supper?*

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To which the Answer is, *To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former Sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life, to have a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death, and be in Charity with all Men.* Of this I shall treat at this time, from those words of the Apostle, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.* Where I must speak,

First, Of the Act or Duty of Self-Examination, Let a Man, &c.

Secondly, Of the Matter of this Examination, and that is, about the Truth of his Repentance; Whether he repent him truly, &c.

Thirdly, Of the Manner or Qualifications that must attend it: And they are,

(1.) *With stedfast Purposes of a new Life.* (2.) *With a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ.* (3.) *With a thankful Remembrance of his Death.* And, (4.) *With an universal Love, or being in Charity with all Men.* Of each of which, something briefly and particularly. And

First, Of the Act or Duty of Self-Examination, Let a Man examine himself, &c. The word *δοκιμαζειν*, to examine, hath in the Scripture a double signification, viz. to prove, and to approve: in the former sense, it signifies a Search or Trial of any Person or Thing; so 'tis us'd 1 *Thess.* 5. 21. *πάντα δοκιμαζετε, prove, or try all things:* in the latter it signifies the Acquittal or Approbation after trial; so 'tis us'd *Rom.* 2. 18. *δοκιμαζεις τα διαφερουσα, thou approvest the things that are excellent.* In both these senses we are here requir'd to examine ourselves; that is, we are first to make full proof, search, and trial of our own Souls, to know their State, and in what Condition they stand before God; and then endeavour to bring the trial to a good issue, that our Conscience may approve, acquit and pass Sentence for us: both these are imply'd in those words of the Apostle, *Examine yourselves whether you be in the Faith, prove or approve yourselves;* 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. that is, seek so to know your State, that you may pass a Judgment on yourselves to be what you profess or pretend to. So that Self-examination may be describ'd to be an Act of the Soul, whereby it reflects upon its past

Actions, and thorowly scans the whole Course of its Life. I style it,

1. *An Act of the Soul*, because to think and consider are peculiar only to rational and immaterial Beings.

2. I style it an Act of the Soul, *whereby it reflects upon its former Actions*, to distinguish it from those direct Acts of the Soul, which only look forward; whereas Self examination looks backward, and calls to account the things that are past. And therefore 'tis added,

Lastly, That it thorowly scans the whole Course of our Lives, making a close Search and Scrutiny into all that we have done, and taking a strict Survey of the whole state of our Soul: 'Tis as it were erecting a Court of Judicature, or keeping an Assize in our own Breast, where Conscience is both the Accuser, Witness, and Judge, to arraign, acquit, or condemn us, according to the Rule of God's Law, either by the Light of Nature, or Scripture, reveal'd to us.

To examine ourselves then, is to call ourselves to an account, to review all our past Actions, and to look into the State and Condition of our Souls; which, however irksome and grievous it may be, like the recounting of Debts, or raking into old Sores, is yet absolutely necessary to the Health and Welfare of our Souls.

And as this is frequently to be done to quit old scores, and to prevent running behind-hand in our spiritual State, so is it more seriously and strictly to be done when we approach the Holy Table; where we must never come without our Wedding Garment, that is, well-dress'd and prepar'd Souls, adorn'd with Grace fit to meet and feast with our Saviour, and leaving all our Sins behind us. And this will lead us from the Nature, to consider,

Secondly, The Matter of Self-examination; and that is, about the Truth of our Repentance, or, as the Catechism expresses it, *Whether we repent us truly of our former Sins*. Now Repentance being a *turning from Sin unto God*, we are to examine what progress we have made in this Course, that is, how far we are advanc'd in forsaking the one, and following the other. For our forsaking of Sin, we are to examine,

1. Whether it be from the Love and Liking of it; for if it be only from the Practice of it, with a reserve of Kindness

Kindness for it, as occasion and opportunity offers, this turning from Sin is founded upon a very unsafe and uncertain bottom. Men may, and often do, abstain from some Vices for Fear of Shame and Punishment, not from the Love of Good, or the Hatred of Evil: This therefore is to be enquir'd into, whether our turning from Sin proceed from a right Principle. If it proceed from a Sense of the natural Pravity and Deformity of it, of its Opposition to the Divine Nature and Will, its Offensiveness to God, and Destructiveness to our own Souls, this Aversion is well-grounded. Otherwise, if we cease from Sin only for want of Ability or Opportunity of committing it, we may not so properly be said to leave Sin, as Sin is said to leave us.

2. We must examine whether our turning from Sin be total or universal, that is, whether we turn from all Sin: for true Repentance lays the Ax to the Root, and cuts down the whole Body of Sin; it will not spare an *Agag*, or retain a kindness for any one darling Vice, but sets us against all Iniquity, and especially against the Sin that doth so easily beset us. Indeed, where we turn from Sin, from the true Principle of Obedience, namely, the Will of God; there we shall turn from all Sin, being all contrary to his Nature and Will: And if we thus hate every false way, and abandon all, even the most beloved Vices, then is our Repentance sound and sincere; otherwise, if we are unwilling to part with all, but reserve a secret liking to any one, if we cease from some Sins only to cleave the closer to others, we have not yet truly repented, but love our Sins better than our Saviour, and so are not qualify'd to feast with him here, or enjoy him hereafter.

3. We must examine not only the Truth, but the Steadiness and Constancy of our Repentance; that is, whether we so turn from Sin, as to return to it no more. True Repentance bids a final Adieu to all sinful Courses, and wills us not to return again to Folly: if we thus do, we shall be worthy and welcome Guests at Christ's Table; otherwise, if we *return with the Dog to his Vomit, or the Sow that was wash'd to her wallowing in the Mire*, we are fitter to feed with Swine than our Saviour, and Husks are more proper for us than these heavenly Dainties.

As for that other Branch of Repentance, which consists in turning unto God, we must examine the Truth and Sincerity of that too, and not cease the Enquiry till we have found how we stand affected towards him: if we cleave unto God with full purpose of Heart, preferring him in our Choice and Affections above all things; if we *love him with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, and count all things but Dross and Dung in comparison of the Excellence of the Knowledge of Christ;* then are we qualify'd for this Heavenly Feast, and may be meet Partakers of these Holy Mysteries. But,

Thirdly, If upon Examination we find (as the best of us will) that all things are not so right with us as they should be, but that we have broken the Laws of God in Thought, Word, and Deed, omitting many things requir'd of us, and committing what is forbidden; we are to add,

I. Our *stedfast Purposes and Resolutions of leading a new Life*: for so the Examination mention'd in our Text and Catechism require from us. The great Design of this Sacrament is to renew our Covenant with God, which we have many times and many ways broken, and to tie our baptismal Vow the more close upon us; for tho at our entrance upon Christianity we solemnly engag'd to be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants to our lives end, yet the best of us have frequently started aside from him, and violated those Engagements. Now tho we are all concern'd daily to call ourselves to an account, to review our Actions, to bewail our manifold Transgressions, and to devote ourselves afresh to his Service; yet this is more especially to be done before we come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when we are more strictly to examine ourselves, to humble ourselves for our past Miscarriages, and to renew our Vows and Resolutions of living better. And that these Vows and Resolutions may be the more firm and lasting, we are,

(1.) To enter upon them on serious and mature Deliberation: 'tis not enough to resolve in general to amend, but we must more particularly weigh the sundry Parts and Passages of a religious Life; what we must part with, what we must do, and what we may suffer in adhering to it: without this, our good Purposes will not hold on, but be shock'd and vanquish'd by every Temptation. Sudden and rash Vows are soon forgot; and he that resolves in haste, will repent by leisure. The unwise Builder in the Gospel,

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that did not set down and consider what his intended Work would cost, was forc'd to leave off in the middle, and was upbraided with that stinging Reflection; *This Man begun to build, but was not able to finish.* In like manner, he that does not duly weigh what Christianity will cost him, will be but half a Christian, and never bring his good Purposes or Designs to any perfection: And therefore we must thorowly consider what we resolve upon, that it may have the full Approbation of our Mind, the free Consent of our Will, and may move with the whole Stream and Current of our Affections: Then will nothing be able to stagger it, nor shall we ever repent the Wisdom of our Choice.

(2.) That our good Purposes may be stedfast, and hold out against all Temptation, they must be taken up upon good grounds. A Tree that is not well-rooted, is liable to be shaken and blown down with every Wind; and a Resolution badly founded, is of no long continuance. He that resolves to amend, only to please a Friend, to avoid Shame or Punishment, and to promote any secular Design, will easily change his Mind when the Tide turns; and if he can commit his Sin with secrecy and safety, will soon return to his former Courses: And therefore our good Purposes must have a better bottom; they must be founded on the Love of Virtue and the Hatred of Vice, with a Sense of the Excellence of the one, and the Baseness of the other; they must proceed from a Sense of our Duty to God, and a due Care of our own Soul: These things will fix and rivet them in our Minds, and not suffer us to waver or shrink from them.

(3.) That our Vows and Purposes may be the more effectual, they must be attended with a diligent Use of all good means that may enable or encourage us to perform them; for without this, they will be all unsuccessful and abortive. 'Tis not sufficient that we have brought our Minds to some good Resolutions, and rest there without any farther Care; we may not think this a Charm strong enough of itself to drive away Sin or Satan from us: no, we must apply ourselves to the use of all good means prescrib'd to that end; that is, we must *strive against Sin* in all its motions and occasions, and *resist the Devil*, before he will flee from us. 'Tis a vain Surmise of some to think, if they do but resolve and intend to mend their Lives, they may satisfy themselves in that, and leave the rest to God Almighty, who will in a supernatural way infuse his Grace into them: This

This is a corrupt Suggestion of a deceitful Heart; for the Spirit of God works not now in any extraordinary manner, but seconds our Endeavours, and assists us in the use of all good means: and we may as well hope to be rich or learned without taking the course for them, as to be holy and virtuous without using the means appointed to that end.

Lastly, That our good Purposes may fit us for the worthy receiving the Lord's Supper, they must be attended with Prayer, and a devout imploring the Assistance of Heaven, to enable us to keep them; for without this, *we can do nothing*, and with it we may be able to *do all things*. 'Twill be in vain to make solemn Vows and Promises of Amendment, without the Aid of God's Holy Spirit to help us to perform them; 'tis this that gives all the Strength and Success to them, and this is only to be had by diligent Prayer: which should make us ever mindful of prostrating ourselves at the Throne of Grace, to obtain Strength to mortify our Sins and to fortify our Grace, and to find help in time of need, especially when we approach this Ordinance: knowing (as one has well observ'd) that he that is not frequently on his Knees before he comes to the holy Table, kneels to very little purpose when there.

2. Our Self Examination must be accompanied *with a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ*; that is, with a full Persuasion of God's Goodness, and his Readiness to impart to us the Virtue and Merits of Christ's Death for our Salvation. This is indeed necessary in all other Acts of Religion; for *he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that diligently seek him*. But 'tis more than ordinarily so in this solemn and venerable Part of Divine Worship, wherein we prepare ourselves to meet our Saviour, and to receive from him all the Benefits and Blessings which he hath purchas'd for us: Here we are to stir up and exercise the highest Acts of Faith, to draw nigh with full assurance of finding Mercy; and our Faith must be not only active, but lively. And if we consider things aright, we shall find abundant Reason so to do? for Christ hath not only invited all penitent Sinners to come to him, but hath promis'd them a hearty Welcome. Let them be ever so heavy laden with the weight of their Sins, if they are but sensible of the burden and desirous of ease, they are assur'd of finding Rest unto their Souls: yea, let the Aggravations of their Sins be ever so many and great, *tho' they are*

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are as Scarlet, they shall be as Wool; tho they are red as Crimson, yet by the Tears of godly Sorrow, they shall become whiter than Snow. Now he is faithful that hath promis'd, and may be safely rely'd upon: His infinite Power and Goodness being firm Props and Pillars of our Faith, and his Truth and Faithfulness may add Life and Strength to it; so that if we renew our Vows and Purposes of a Holy Life, we may come with Boldness to this Holy Table, bringing with us a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ, that is, thro' his Merits and Mediation, which alone intitle us to it.

3. This Self-examination must be attended with a thankful Remembrance of Christ's Death: This we have seen to be the great End of this Gospel-Feast, to commemorate the Death of Christ with Thanksgiving, to recount what he hath done and suffer'd for our Redemption, and to keep up the Sense and Memory of his Goodness: And certainly if any Mercy deserves Thanks, or is worthy to be remember'd, this which Christ hath done ought to fill our Hearts with Joy, and our Mouths with the Praises of our Redeemer. To forget the Kindness of a dear Friend is a great piece of Baseness, and to neglect the Tokens by which he desir'd to be remember'd, adds to the Unworthiness: But to forget the unparalleled Love of our Saviour, and to omit the Memorials of his Kindness, is the very height of Ingratitude. To rescue any from Captivity and Bondage, will leave deep Impressions of Thankfulness upon all ingenuous Natures; but to rescue another from Death by dying for him, is a Mercy never to be forgotten: both these have been in the highest measure done for us by our blessed Saviour, who hath ransom'd us from the vilest Bondage to the worst of Enemies, at the price of his own Blood, and by his Death hath deliver'd us from the Pains of eternal Death. And what Gratitude can be great enough for such inestimable Favours? How can we let slip the Remembrance of such inexpressible Kindness? How can we think of it without Hearts inflam'd with Love and Gratitude? And much less may we celebrate the Memorials of it without Raptures of Joy and Thankfulness.

Lastly, Our Self-examination must be follow'd with an universal Love to Mankind, and being in Charity with all Men. To this Christ directs in all Acts of Religious Worship, Mat. 5. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there rememberest thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first*
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be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.

But this must be most carefully done, when we approach the Altar in this Sacred Ordinance, where we remember the greatest Love that was ever shew'd to the Sons of Men; which we cannot better commemorate, than with Hearts full of Love to the Brethren. There we behold and receive the Pledges of our Peace and Reconciliation with God, and therefore must come to it in perfect Peace and Reconciliation with one another. The Lord's Supper is a Feast of Love, design'd to unite us to Christ as the Head, and to each other as the Members. Eating and Drinking together at the same Table, is a means to signify and create Love, and serve to fasten Men together in the firmest Leagues of Friendship; but the Bread we eat at Christ's Table, should be the strongest Bond of Love and Unity, and the Cup we there drink of, should be a Cup of Charity. The Jews were commanded to eat the Passover *with unleavened Bread*, that nothing might swell or sour their minds; and the Apostle alluding to it, wills us to keep this Gospel-Feast *not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*: signifying that we must empty our Hearts of all Malice, Envy, Hatred, and the like, before we approach the Holy Table, and must take care that we come to it in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.

Thus having seen the Duty of Self-examination, together with those Qualifications that must attend it; I shall conclude with the

Last words of our Text, *And so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*: which words signify not a bare Permission only, or a Liberty of letting these things alone; but an Injunction rather, first to examine ourselves, and then to partake of these Holy Mysteries.

We may not look upon this as a Matter of Indifference, whether we do it or no, but as an indispensable Duty, which the Command of our Saviour, and the Necessities of our Souls require from us. Some Men are sufficiently aware of the Danger of coming unworthily, but have little or no Sense of the Danger of not coming at all; yea, too many think themselves safe, if they meddle not with these Sacred Mysteries: as if all the Evil lay in the ill performance, and there were no danger in the Neglect of them. These Mens Consciences are but half inform'd; they see
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the Evil of one side, but are blind on the other: whereas if they will but open their eyes, they may easily see the Danger to be very great on both. To eat and drink unworthily, is to profane the Lord's Body; not to eat it, is to despise and contemn it: He that does the former, eats and drinks his own Damnation; he that allows himself in the latter, commits a damnable Sin: The one is as taking of Poison, the other is a certain Famine or Death. And therefore to prevent both these Evils, let us prepare ourselves by a strict Examination of our ways, and then draw nigh to that holy Table, where if we remember our Saviour now, we shall be remember'd by him hereafter; and by feeding on him by Faith here, shall feast with him for ever in his Heavenly Kingdom.





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*The Great Duty of confessing
Christ before Men; together with the
unspeakable Reward of Blessedness an-
nex'd to it.*

I N A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H ' D

Before the U N I V E R S I T Y of
Oxford, Dec. 11. 1720.

By *MATTHEW HOLE, D. D.*
Late Rector of *Exeter-College* in *Oxford.*

Rom. X. 9, 10. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth
the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God
hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and
with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.*

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.



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MATTHEW X. 32.

Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before Men, him will I alſo confeſs before my Father which is in Heaven; (the following words are) But whoſoever ſhall deny me before Men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in Heaven.



THESE are the words of our bleſſed Saviour, which he ſpoke to his Apoſtles and Diſciples, upon his ſending them forth to preach the Goſpel to all Nations; as we read in the foregoing part of this Chapter, wherein he gave them many excellent Rules and Precepts, for the better Conduct of themſelves in that great and weighty Affair, endowing them with Gifts and Graces ſutable to the Work whereunto he had called them, and furniſhing them with a power of working Miracles for the Confirmation of the Doctrine delivered by them: withal, requiring all Perſons and Places where they came, to receive and entertain them; and denouncing many Woes and Threats againſt thoſe that deſpiſe and reject them.

And to prevent ſurprize, which is the ſting and bitterneſs of any Trouble, he lets them know, what kind of uſage they might expect from ſome Men, to arm them againſt the worſt that might betide them. *Behold (ſaith he) I ſend you forth as Sheep among Wolves, be ye therefore wiſe*

as *Serpents*, and harmless as *Doves*. The Sheep (you know) are often worried and betray'd by the Wolf, especially when he comes in Sheep's clothing to deceive and to devour. Such sort of Treatment (he tells them) they might find from some in the World under the like Disguises; and therefore wills them to use the wisdom of the Serpent in avoiding all unnecessary Dangers; and withal to preserve the innocency of the Dove in patiently bearing all that are unavoidable. To which end he minds them, that *the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord; if they persecute me they will also persecute you, yea, ye shall be hated of all Men for my Sake. But fear not* (saith he) neither be dismay'd, your adhering to me will tend to your eternal Honour and Happiness; whereas by deserting of me you will purchase nothing but Misery and Destruction; the Reason whereof is added in the words of the Text, *For whosoever shall confess me before Men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven; but whosoever shall deny me, &c.*

The words consist of two intire Propositions: The one shewing the Benefit of confessing; the other, the Danger of denying Christ before Men.

I shall speak at this time of the first of these, contain'd in these words, *Whosoever shall confess me before Men, &c.* Where we may observe,

- I. A great Duty recommended to us, and that is, the confessing of Christ before Men.
- II. A suitable Reward and Encouragement annex'd to it; and that is, Christ's confessing us before his Father in Heaven.

In treating of both which I shall enquire;

First, What is meant by our confessing of Christ.

Secondly, What by confessing him before Men.

Thirdly, What is implied in Christ's confessing us before his Father. And,

Lastly, Close up with an earnest Exhortation to both.

First, Then, What is meant here by confessing of Christ? To confess in Holy Scripture is a word of large Extent and Signification, and hath different Senses, according to the different

different Matter or Object to which it is applied: 'tis sometimes applied to Sins and Transgressions; the confessing whereof, is the laying them open before God, and our Neighbours, against whom they are committed: And this is one great part of Repentance, and a necessary Condition of the Remission of Sins. Sometimes 'tis applied to Mercies and Deliverances, the confessing whereof is a grateful acknowledgment of Favours and Blessings received: and this is a part of Prayer and Thanksgiving unto God, and other subordinate Instruments of his Providence, by whom they are convey'd. Sometimes again 'tis applied to the great Truths and Mysteries of Religion, deliver'd to us in the Holy Gospel, the confessing whereof is the declaring our assent to, and belief of them: And this is an Act of Faith in Christ Jesus, by whom they are reveal'd to us.

Now the confessing of Sins committed, and Mercies received, are both of them religious Acts of Duties; and, when done in obedience to Christ's Commands, may in some sense be said to be a confessing of Christ; yet the confessing of him, here chiefly intended, is that of the Truths and Mysteries of his Religion revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures; such as the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our blessed Saviour; the confessing whereof consists, not only in believing of them in the Heart, but in professing of them with the Tongue, for *with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation*, Rom. 10. So that to confess Christ, is, First, in general to own him for the Messias, and to receive him as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World, who took our Nature upon him to *die for our Sins, and rise again for our Justification*. That such a one was promised from the beginning to recover fallen Man, and restore him to the lost Love and Favour of his Maker, the Prophecies and Predictions of the Old Testament plainly declare; and that Jesus Christ of the Seed of *David* was this Person promised, and anointed of God for this purpose, the fulfilling of these Promises and Predictions in him, recorded in the New Testament, fully demonstrate.

Now the acknowledging of Christ to be this Person, or the receiving of him as the *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* or he that shou'd come, is what is here meant by confessing of Christ. This is that famous Confession of *St. Peter* and the other

Apostles, upon which, as upon a Rock, Christ is said to have founded his Church; for when he ask'd his Disciples, whom he sent abroad, what Opinion the World had of him, they replied, that the World was divided in their Thoughts about him, *some taking him for Eliás, others for Jeremias, others for that great Prophet that was to come into the World.* He thereupon ask'd them, what Opinion they had of him; *But whom say ye that I am?* To which, *Peter* in the name of the rest, answer'd, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Which Confession he not only commended as a Truth reveal'd to them from Heaven, but made it the foundation of his Church, which he built so firmly upon it, that neither *the Gates of Hell,* nor any *Powers upon Earth shall ever prevail against it.*

By this Confession Christians are distinguish'd from *Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Hereticks,* who either wholly deny, or upon occasion disown and forsake him. And as in the beginning of Christianity the Apostles were known by their firm adherence to Christ from Apostates that forsook him, so by our stedfast continuance in this Faith, the true Disciples of Christ are distinguished from the Deserters and Despisers of him. And because our degenerate Age affords too many such Anti-Christians; 'twill be requisite more particularly to describe the true Confessors of Christ, to discern them from the false Pretenders to him. To which end we must note,

Secondly, That to confess Christ aright, is to acknowledg and adore the Divinity of his Person, to own him to be truly God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. This is a Truth stedfastly to be believed against the Heresy of the *Arians, Socinians* and *Dissenters* of our Days, who wou'd degrade him into a Creature, or mere Man like ourselves; and because he condescended to take our human Nature, they take the boldness to rob him of the divine. This is a Heresy condemned by Scripture, and the Decrees of all the Learned Fathers and Councils, who require us to worship and glorify the Son, as we do the Father.

The Prophet *Isaiah* styl'd him *Emanuel* under the Old Testament, that is, *God with us,* which Name was likewise given him under the New. At his Incarnation he was said to be *God manifest in the Flesh*; and tho he vouchsafed to be born of a Woman, yet was he still confess'd to be God, blessed

blest for evermore. Yea, we find our Saviour insisting upon his Godhead, declaring himself one with the Father, saying, *I and my Father are one*; and that, not in Consent only, but in Essence and Substance: for *being in the Form of God*, (saith the Apostle) *he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*, which wou'd be great Arrogance and Presumption in any Creature or mere Man to affirm. The Author to the Hebrews styles him, *the brightness of his Father's Glory and the express Image of his Person, by whom also he made the World*, and still upholdeth all Things by the word of his Power. When he came into the World, all the Angels of God, the highest rank of Creatures, were commanded to worship him, saying, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter of thy Kingdom*, Heb. 1. where not only the Titles, but all the Attributes and Properties of the Deity are ascribed to him; which Honour all Ages of the Church have given to him: which shows the firm Foundation of our Faith in the Divinity of his Person, and the great Reason we have both to confess and worship him.

Thirdly, To confess Christ is to believe the Divinity of his Doctrine, and to receive the Truths of the Gospel, delivered by him, as the Oracles of God, taking them for the inspired Dictates of his holy Spirit, and looking upon them, *not as the word of Man*, but, as indeed they are, *the word of God*; which the Miracles and mighty Works done in Confirmation of them plainly declare. This is to be believed and confess'd against the Anti-Scripturists and Libertines of our Times, who slight the Authority of God in the holy Scriptures, and give no Credence unto his Word.

The Word of God is sometimes taken for God himself: *In the beginning was the Word* (saith St. John) *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*; John 1. 1. And ver. 14. 'tis taken for Christ; *The Word was made Flesh, and we beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*. So that to confess the Truth of his Word, is to confess God and Christ; and to deny the Authority of that, is to deny both. *He that is of God beareth God's Word; ye therefore hear him not* (saith the beloved Disciple) *because ye are not of God*. Nicodemus confess'd Christ to be a Teacher come from God, for none

cou'd do the Works that he did, except God were with him; and indeed the Greatness and Goodness of his Works may abundantly convince any, that his Doctrine is Divine, and his Words faithful Sayings, worthy of all Men to be received.

*Fourthly, To confess Christ, is to acknowledg and rely upon the All-sufficiency of his Merits and Mediation for us. When Mankind had undone themselves and their Posterity by disobeying their Maker, and thereby incur'd all the dismal Effects of his Displeasure, the Son of God was pleas'd to interpose and intercede in their behalf, to make Atonement for their Sins by the Sacrifice of himself, to satisfy divine Justice for us, and thereby to make our Peace and Reconciliation with God. *There is one God (saith the Apostle) and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.**

Now to take Christ for this sole Mediator, and to depend entirely upon his All sufficient Sacrifice, to expect Life and Salvation wholly from his Merits and Intercession; saying with the Apostles, *there is no Name given under Heaven whereby we can be saved, but the Name of Jesus*, neither is there any other: This is truly and properly to confess Christ.

Lastly, To confess him aright, is not only to assent to the Divinity of his Person and Doctrine, but to show the Efficacy of such a belief upon our Lives, and the Influence it ought to have upon the whole Course of our Conversation, by conforming our Actions to the Rule of Christ's Precepts and Example, and obeying from the Heart that form of Doctrine which he hath deliver'd us. For Christianity is not a mere speculative Science, consisting only in barren empty Notions, that only float in the Brain, or glide upon the Tongue; but a practical Art of living well, that makes us fruitful in good Works, and abounding in all Christian Graces and Virtues, to the Praise and Glory of God.

In short then, To confess Christ is to own and receive him in all his Offices; namely, as a Prophet to teach and instruct us, as a Priest to offer Sacrifice, and intercede for us, and as a King to rule and govern us in all our Ways. By which we see, what is meant by confessing of Christ.

But

But what is it to confess him before Men? Why, that is, publickly to declare our Faith in him, and to *bold fast the Profession of it without wavering*, by asserting and defending the Truth of his Doctrine against all Opposers, when thereunto called: For, not to appear for him in such Cases, is rather to betray than to confess him; 'tis to shrink from, and be ashamed of, instead of owning him before Men. Now this confessing of Christ must be before good Men and bad, for there may be Times and Occasions that may require both.

We are to confess him before good Men, to preserve the harmony of Confessions and unity of Faith among Christians; for which reason the Church requires our daily rehearsing our Creed, to show our consenting in the same Faith. For nothing tends more to the Honour and Propagation of true Religion, than the harmony and good agreement of its Professors in the main matters of Faith and Practice; for that renders it amiable and lovely in the sight of God and Men, it adds a beauty to Holiness, adorns our Worship, and gives Efficacy to all our Prayers. If (as our Saviour assures us) the agreement of two or three in what they ask, will prevail for an answer, How much more prevalent will be the united Petitions and Confessions of the whole Church, especially when offer'd up by the same Advocate and Mediator?

Again, We are to confess Christ before bad Men, to preserve the Soundness and Orthodoxy of Faith, that it be not corrupted by Error, or destroy'd by Heresy, or undermin'd by Schism; but to keep it pure and uncorrupt, by our publick owning and vindicating it against all its Enemies. This is what our Saviour here encourages, and may well enough expect from us.

And as this is to be done at all times; for St. *Peter* wills us, to be always ready to give a Reason of the Faith and Hope that is in us; so it is more especially to be done in times of Danger and Persecution, when these Truths are most violently oppos'd and call'd in Question. Times have been, and still may be, when naming the Name of Christ hath exposed many to great Troubles and Tribulations, by hailing them before Magistrates and Governors, dooming them to Bonds and Imprisonments, and even Death itself, for his Name's sake. This was the Case of the Apostles, and primitive Christians, and likewise of that noble Army of Martyrs that followed them; who bravely defended the great Mysteries of

Christ's Religion with their Lives, and sealed the Truth of them with their Blood; for which reason they are justly reckon'd in the number of Confessors, the Effect whereof was, that by their Courage and Constancy in the Cause of Christ, they convinced and converted the greatest Gainsayers. St. Paul being call'd before King *Agrippa*, by the wisdom and strength of his Arguments, persuaded him to be almost a Christian. And when he reason'd before *Felix*, concerning Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, the Judge trembled more than the Prisoner. *Peter* and *John* having been with Jesus, put on such Courage and Boldness, as confounded the chief Priests and Elders, and silenced their bitterest Adversaries. The Enemies of St. *Stephen* cou'd not resist the Wisdom and Spirit, by which he spake. And many others, by making a bold and undaunted Confession of Christ, have turn'd the Hearts and Minds of the greatest Persecutors. Here therefore we may note a difference between the false Professors of Christ, and the true Confessors of him; the former are those, that profess themselves his Followers in times of Prosperity, when the advantages of Honour and Preferments run that way, and all things go smooth and easy with them: But when Trouble and Tribulations arise by reason of the Word, by and by they are offended, and prove Renegadoes and Revolters from him, like those in the Gospel, who follow'd him for the Loaves, but when they fail'd walk'd no more with him. Such as these betray the Hollownes and Hypocrisy of their Profession, and shall have their Portion with Infidels and Unbelievers. Whereas the true Confessors are those, that acknowledg and adore him at all times, as well of Adversity as Prosperity, and continue with him, when matters run cross to their Expectations, and little else than Discouragements and Disappointments attend them: These shew the Soundness and Sincerity of their Confession, and shall be confess'd and rewarded accordingly. And this will lead me

From the Duty of the Text, to consider the Reward annex'd to it; and that is Christ's confessing them before his Father which is in Heaven: *Whosoever shall confess me before Men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven.* Where I must again enquire,

1st. What is meant by Christ's confessing of us.

2dly, What by confessing us before his Father in Heaven. And,

3dly, Show the unspeakable Blessedness, that will accrue from both.

1st, then, What is meant by Christ's confessing of us. Why! By that is signified, his owning our stedfast Faith and firm Adherence to him at all times, and in all places, and before all Persons: not only accepting our Persons, but approving and publicly rewarding our Actions, commending our Diligence and Fidelity in the Service, and saying to us with the Master in the Parable, *Well done good and faithful Servant! thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee Ruler over more, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

This is briefly Christ's confessing us, by publicly declaring our Constancy and Continuance with him in the worst of Times, and under the greatest Discouragements. And this he doth sometimes, and in some measure even in this Life, by confessing and commending his true Followers before Men. He gave *Noah* the Character of a Preacher of Righteousness to the old World, and recorded him with Honour for his diligent walking with God, when the rest of the World wallowed in all manner of wickedness; and thereby saved him and his Family from the general Deluge. He confess'd *Lot* to be the only righteous Man in *Sodom*, whose Soul was grieved at the ungodly Conversation of the wicked, and for that reason was preserv'd from that general Conflagration that consumed that debauched City. He said of *Job*, that he was a perfect and upright Man, and there was none like him upon Earth, one that feared God, and eschewed Evil, and walked uprightly in a crooked Generation. And of *David* he gave this Character, that he was a Man after his own Heart, that cleaved stedfastly to him, and swerved not from the Path of his Commandments.

But Christ's confessing us before his Father in Heaven, relates chiefly to the World to come, and denotes his owning and appearing for us in the last and great day of Judgment, when he will bespeak his Father in Heaven in behalf of his faithful Followers, to this or the like purpose: Father, These are they that confessed me before Men to the hazard of their Lives, and all that was dear to them; no Terrors of earthly Punishments or loss of worldly Substance cou'd fright them; nor any Temptations of worldly Preferments allure

lure them from me: they have continued stedfast with me to the last, when others forsook me for the love of this present World. Father; I will that now a distinction be made between them that served me, and them that served me not. I pray not for the World, but for them thou hast given me out of the World, that where I am, there they may be also. They glorified thee upon Earth, and kept thy word; they have believed in me, and that thou hast sent me, therefore now glorify them in Heaven, with the glory I had with thee before the World began. Hereupon, God the Father, who always hears his beloved Son, will separate these Confessors of him from the Rest of Mankind, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats, setting the one on his right Hand in a state of endless Bliss and Happiness, and the other on the left in a Condition of everlasting Woe and Misery. To those on the right hand, which are his true Confessors, Christ himself will pronounce the blessed Sentence of Absolution, saying to them; *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World.* Where every Word will sound sweetly in their Ears, and breathe out nothing but Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

The first word, COME, is a gracious Call, or invitation into the presence of God, the Father and Fountain of all Felicity, in whose Presence is fullness of Joy, and at whose right hand are Rivers of Pleasure for evermore. And as to be bid to depart from him, and to be driven from his Presence, is the dreadful Doom of reprobate Cast-a-ways; so to be bid to come to him, and to be welcomed by him, is the top, and height of all Happiness.

The next words, COME YE BLESSED CHILDREN OF MY FATHER, add much to the Joy and Comfort of the Sentence; for whereas the wicked are sent away with a Curse, these are called to him to receive the Blessing. And what *Balack* said unto *Balaam*, may be more truly said in this Case, I wot that he, whom the Lord blesteth, is blessed indeed; especially since he calleth them not Servants, who are wont to be kept at a distance, but takes them into the number, and near relation of Children, who are allowed to come with greater boldness. And if earthly Parents know and delight to give Blessing and good things to their Children, how much more able and willing is our heavenly Father, whose Love and Compassions are infinitely

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nately greater than theirs, to give the most noble Blessings to his dear and beloved Children? This is more plainly set forth in the following words of the Sentence, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you.* A Kingdom (you know) is the highest thing, that the most exalted Ambition can aspire to, as including in it all that we can want, or wish for. This our blessed Saviour purchased of his Father, and hath promised to all his faithful Followers, saying to them, *Fear not, little Flock, 'tis your Father's Pleasure to give you a Kingdom.* And here he in-states or enters them upon the Possession of it, in those words, *receive the Kingdom prepar'd for you:* And what ravishing delight (think you) must enter into, and possess the Soul upon the hearing of such transporting words, Receive a Kingdom! What can be said higher? And that not a Temporal, but an Heavenly one too, which cannot be lost or forfeited. Earthly Kingdoms may be shaken by Rebels, or undermin'd by Traytors, or invaded by Usurpers; but this heavenly Kingdom is not liable to either, being out of the reach of all Enemies and Opposers. Crowns have been taken from the Heads of Princes, and have oftner proved a Crown of Thorns, than of Glory to them that wear them. Their Scepters likewise may be wrested out of their Hands, and become rather a Rod of Iron, than a Staff of Gold to the Possessors.

But the Confessors of Christ receive a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and a Crown of Glory that can never be taken from them, but will for ever sit, and shine and flourish on their Heads. And therefore St. *Matthew* expresses it by inheriting the Kingdom, which (you know) is a Tenure not for any Term of Time or Years, but for ever; and signifies to us that their Title to and Possession of it shall never fail or expire. Of this they may rest assured, this Kingdom being prepared for them before the Foundation of the World. Which words relate to the Transactions between the Father and the Son from all Eternity, touching the manner and measure of Christ's Sufferings, in order to the making our Peace and Reconciliation with God. Whence he is styled, The Lamb of God slain before the Foundation of the World, *i. e.* in God's eternal Decree and Determination: and St. *Peter* tells us, that 'twas by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, that he was taken, and by the hands of wicked Men crucify'd and slain, *Acts. 2.* by which he is said to take away the Sins of the World, to make our
Peace

Peace by the Blood of his Cross, and to become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, having prepared a Kingdom for them before the World began, into which he will solemnly enter his faithful Servants at the last Day.

This is briefly Christ's confessing them before his Father which is in Heaven : The Blessedness whereof no Tongue is able to express, nor can the Heart of Man conceive those Extraneous of Joy, that will fill the breast upon the hearing of this happy Sentence ; the Joy whereof being too big to enter into us, we shall enter into that.

And now what vast Encouragement have we to confess Christ before Men ; which will be return'd with such an ample and noble Reward, as his owning and confessing us before our heavenly Father ? How can we shew greater Wisdom, Honour and Safety, than by sticking to him, who will surely bring us to an everlasting Kingdom, and a Crown of Glory, that will never wither or decay ?

All earthly things, we see, that so many seem to doat on, are but mere trifling and transitory Shadows, that have no other worth in them, than what the Fancies of vain Men put upon them. The Profits and Preferments of the World, if ill-gotten or ill-used, may be reckon'd rather to Loss than Gain, and bring neither Credit nor Comfort to the Possessors. Sensual Pleasures are mix'd and momentary, and soon end in Loathing and Remorse ; and the most glittering Pumps and Vanities of the World, like a flash of Lightning, quickly pass away, and come not again. Whereas,

The Gain and Pleasures of Religion and Godliness are of a higher Nature and will prove more permanent and lasting ; for they instate us into an Inheritance immortal, incorruptible, that fadeth not away, but is eternal, reserved in Heaven for us.

Wherefore, to draw to a Conclusion, let us learn from this Discourse, boldly to confess Christ, as the Apostles did, before the greatest Men, and never shrink from him in the worst of Times ; let no fears of Punishment or hopes of Preferment ever warp or seduce us from our Duty to him, but let us firmly build our Confidence upon him, as upon the Rock of our Salvation, Let us always appear in the defense of his Truths against all Opposition, and vindicate his Doctrine and Divinity against all the Attempts of Infidels and Hereticks, especially at this time, when they are so openly and
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publickly assaulted. If we own him now, he will surely own us hereafter before his Father, and the holy Angels, which will be our greatest Glory and Happiness. If the Opposition we meet with, shall at any time rise so high, as to cost us our Lives, as it happen'd to the Apostles and other Forerunners in the Faith, we shall be no Losers, but infinite Gainers by our Adherence to him: for he that will save his Life by deserting his Saviour, shall surely lose it; and he that will lose his Life for Christ's sake, shall certainly find it. All the Loss will be in changing a short, painful, and miserable Life, for one that is everlasting, and happy without End: And he that sees not the difference of these Things is dim-sighted, and cannot see afar off.

In short then, Let us open our Eyes, that we may discern where our true Interest and Happiness lies, which we shall find to be in sticking to Christ, and confessing him before Men, to whom if we prove faithful unto Death, we shall surely receive from him a Crown of Life.



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*The Great Sin of denying Christ
before Men; together with the unex-
pressible Danger and Punishment that
will attend it.*

I N A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

Before the U N I V E R S I T Y of
Oxford, Jan. 29. 17²⁰₂₁.

By *MATTHEW HOLE*, D. D.

Late Rector of *Exeter-College* in *Oxford*.

Mark VIII. 38. *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of
me, and of my words in this adulterous and sinful Gene-
ration, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed
when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy
Angels.*

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXI.

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MATTHEW X. 33.

But whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.



DISCOURSED lately in this place of the great benefit of confessing Christ before Men, from the Words immediately preceding our Text, *Whosoever shall confess me before Men, him will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven*: Where I shew'd what is meant by confessing of Christ before Men; and likewise what is implied in Christ's confessing us before his Father in Heaven; the one showing the excellence and extent of the Duty, and the other the suitableness and ampleness of the Reward; and both the unspeakable Blessedness that will accrue from them.

I proceed now to set forth the great Danger of denying of Christ before Men, the Sin opposite to the foregoing Duty, together with the suitable Punishment threatned and annex'd to it, contain'd in these words, *Whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.*

In treating of which words, it will be requisite to inquire,

First, What is meant by denying of Christ before Men.

Secondly, What are the Motives or Inducements that lead Men to the denying of him.

Thirdly, What is the way and manner of Mens denying of him, with the great Evil and Sinfulness of so doing.

And,

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Lastly,

Lastly, What is meant by Christ's denying of them before his Father which is in Heaven, together with the exceeding great Danger and Misery that will attend it. Of each of these something particularly. And

First, What is it to deny Christ? Why! That being opposed to the confessing of Christ, which is the owning and accepting of him for our Saviour, must be the rejecting and disowning of him as such, and casting off all Hopes and Expectations from him. So that to deny Christ is, in general, to deny his Mission and Messiahship, to disown him for the Son of God and the Saviour of the World, and not to receive him for the Person anointed and appointed of God for the Redemption of Mankind.

This was and still is the great Sin and Folly of the *Jews*, who continue to this Day to reject our Saviour: and to look for another, notwithstanding all the mighty and wonderful Works which he did before them for their Conviction. Yea, tho all the Promises and Prophecies of the Messiah exactly agree and were fulfilled in him, tho all the Prophets foretold and spake of him, and St. *John* who was more than a Prophet, directed and pointed to him at his first Appearance, as *the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World*: yet this stubborn and faithless Generation of Men cannot be persuaded to receive or believe in him, but persist still in their obstinate Impenitence and Infidelity. And 'twere well if this denying of Christ were peculiar to the *Jews* only, who were cast off for their unbelief. But alas! many among the *Gentiles*, who were received into favour upon their rejection, are unhappily fallen into the same Infidelity; *An Evil Heart of Unbelief* being found in them, in departing from the Love and Fear of the living God, and of his Son Jesus Christ. St. *Paul* speaks of some among the *Philippians*, and he cou'd not speak of them *without weeping, who were Enemies to the Cross of Christ*, which he bore for their Sins; and who instead of denying Ungodliness and fleshly Lusts, denied their Saviour, and despised all that he had done and suffer'd for them. They are described by their Sensuality and worldly-mindedness, by *making their Belly their God, by glorying in their Shame, and minding only earthly Things*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. And too many still deny him, by whom alone we can hope to be saved and own'd at the last Day.

But

But to speak more particulaaly ; Who are they, in whom this Infidelity, or evil Heart of Unbelief is found ? In answer whereunto I say,

1st, That they who deny the Divinity of Christ, are in the first Rank of the Denyers of him. Of this sort were the *Pharisees*, chief Priests and Elders of old, who charged him with *Blasphemy*, for saying, *he was the Son of God*, and forbad the Apostles and others to speak any more in *his Name*. These were after followed by the *Arians*, *Eutychians*, *Sabellians*, and other Hereticks, who denied and confounded the Persons of the holy Trinity ; which Heresies are now again revived and rubb'd up by the Sectaries, and Free-thinkers of our Age, who seek to rob the Son of God of the Godhead, who *thought it no Robbery to be equal with the Father*. Our Saviour himself tells us, that *he and the Father are one* ; and elsewhere, that *he is in the Father, and the Father in him* ; meaning that the same divine Nature, and the same divine Attributes of Immensity, Eternity and the like, equally belong to both. *There is one God* (saith the Apostle) *and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. for as the reasonable Soul and Flesh is one Man, so God and Man is one Christ. And therefore,

2^{dly}, To deny the Incarnation or Manhood of Christ as well as his Godhead, is to deny Christ, in whom both these Natures are united. There were a sort of Hereticks in the beginning of Christianity, who denied the reality of Christ's Body, affirming it to be only a Body of Air, a Spectrum or Apparition, that appear'd for a while, and then vanished away ; which some of the Apostles themselves suspected, till our Saviour confuted it by submitting himself to the Trial of their own Senses, bidding them to *handle him and see him, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have*, Luke 24. 39. St. John tells us, that *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth* : And St. Paul, that *in him dwelleth the fulness of the God-head bodily* : that is, in human Flesh, which he elsewhere calls the great *Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh* : For as the Children are partakers of *Flesh and Blood*, he likewise partook of the same. And as he was begotten of the Father before all Worlds, so was he in the fulness of Time born of a Woman ; by which he be-

came our *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*. This is a great Mystery, which Flesh and Blood could never reveal to us ; but being reveal'd by God himself is to be made the Object of our Faith, and not to be scann'd by our shallow Reason. To deny or disbelieve this, is to deny Christ to be come in the Flesh, which is to subvert the Foundation of the Christian Religion, and to defeat all the Hopes of a Christian.

3dly, To deny the Satisfaction of Christ, is to deny Christ, and all that he hath done and suffer'd for us ; the great end whereof was to make an Atonement for the Sins of Mankind, and to restore them to the lost Love and Favour of their Maker, which he did by the Merits of his Death and Passion, and making his Soul an Offering or Sacrifice for Sin. And to deny or decry this, is to destroy the whole work of Man's Redemption, and defeat the main design of Christ's Incarnation : And this is done by the *Socinians* and *Deists* of our Days ; who deny his Godhead, which gave all the Merit and Worth to his Sufferings, and question his Manhood, which alone made him capable of undergoing them ; and by both disown all Satisfaction made to divine Justice for us : without which, as we must be eternally miserable, so no mere Man is able to effect it for us ; *for there is no Man that liveth and sinneth not*, and he that hath Sins of his own to atone for, can never satisfy for others ; their Sufferings not having Merit or Value enough for their Expiation : *It cost more to redeem a Soul* (saith holy *David*) *so that he must let that alone for ever*. And therefore *such an high Priest became us* (saith the Apostle) *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens* ; which can be affirm'd of none but our blessed Saviour : and to deny this, is to deprive ourselves of all Interest in, and Benefit of his Mediation.

4thly, To deny the Resurrection of Christ is to deny Christ himself ; for he hath stiled himself *the Resurrection and the Life*, saying, *He that believeth in me, that is, in my Resurrection, tho he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die eternally*, John II. 26.

Our Saviour's Resurrection is the main Proof of his Doctrine, upon which he hath laid the whole stress of the Truth and Certainty of it. *Destroy this Temple* (saith he) *and in three Days I will raise it up*, meaning the Temple of

of his Body. In which if he had fail'd, the Credit of his Mission and Doctrine had fail'd with it, and he had justly fallen under the Censure of an Impostor; but having made it good, and rais'd it at the time appointed, he hath abundantly confirm'd the truth of both, and proved himself the true Messiah. So that Christ's Resurrection is the main Prop and Pillar of the Christian Religion, and the sole Foundation of all our Faith and Hope in him: *for if Christ be not risen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain*, 1 Cor. 15. And to deny this is to strike at the Root of all Religion, and to undermine the whole Fabrick of Man's Redemption. This was done by the Sadduces of old, who said *there was no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit*, Acts 23. as also by Hymeneus and Philetus, *who concerning the Truth erred, saying, the Resurrection was past already, and overthrew the Faith of some*, 2 Tim. 2. 17, 18. And the same is done by the Scepticks and Libertines of our Age, who deny the Resurrection and a future Life, that they may wallow in all Uncleanness in this; for they who think they shall die like Beasts, will be easily persuaded to livelike such. Which shows it necessary to a good Life here, to be thorowly persuaded of rising to another hereafter.

5thly, To deny Christ's Authority over his Church and Kingdom, is to deny Christ; for he that disowns the Power and Authority of a Prince, disowns the Prince himself, and says in effect, we will not have this Man to reign over us. After our Saviour's Resurrection from the dead, all Power was given him both in Heaven and Earth; by virtue whereof he erected and establish'd the Christian Church, which he govern'd himself during his stay upon Earth; but before he return'd to Heaven, he delegated this Power to his Apostles, and their Successors, appointing Rulers and Teachers in it for the good Order and Government of it to the World's end: for he gave, first, Apostles, secondarily, Prophets, then Pastors and Teachers, for the work of the Ministry, and the edifying the Body of Christ. Now to submit to this Power once exercised by Christ in Person, and now by his Ministers deputed and sent by him, is to own him as our Lord and Master, and to preserve the Order, Unity and Authority of his Church, whereby we become living Members of that Mystical Body, whereof he is the Head. But to reject or resist this Authority, is to deny

Christ himself, and to cast off all Obedience to his regal Power: for, as they who withstand the Authority of Officers or Magistrates commission'd by a King, do in effect withstand the Authority of the King himself; so they who deny submission to those whom Christ hath set over us, to rule and instruct his Church, deny Christ himself, and lift up the Heel against the Head. And this is done by a new set of Atheists and Free-thinkers lately started up among us, who wou'd bereave the Church of all Power of opening and shutting the Gates of it, to leave it naked and defenseless against those that seek to destroy and lay it waste. They would deprive its Ministers of all Authority of Blessing in God's Name, of absolving Penitents, of excommunicating the obstinate and perverse, and so would lay all things in common, that like a neglected Garden it may be over-run with the weeds of Error, Heresies and Schisms, and so leave no face of a Church or Religion among us. This may be truly said to be a denying of Christ, who to prevent it has commanded all his Followers, to *obey them that are over them in the Lord, as those that watch for their Souls, and must give an Account*, that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief.

In short then, to deny the Doctrine of Christ, and the Truths delivered by him, is to deny Christ himself, for *he that believeth not my Word (saith he) hath made me a Liar*. There can be no greater sign of the Contempt of any Person, than to slight his Words, and to give no Credit to what he says; and he that thus slights the Sayings of our Saviour, and gives no Credence to his Words, denies the Veracity of Him who is Truth itself, and consequently disowns him for his Lord and Master. And this may be done, not only to Christ in his own Person, but to Christ in his Ministers; for *he that beareth you (saith he to his Apostles) beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*: by which it appears, that not to receive Christ's Doctrine, is not only to deny the Son, but the Father that sent him, and so breaks the whole Chain of Man's Salvation.

And this is done by Scepticks and Anti-Scripturists, who deny the Truth, and deride the Authority of the holy Scriptures; and instead of making them the Rule of their Faith and Manners, make them the Object of their profane Jest and Raillery, decrying the sacred Mysteries of Religion, and

expo-

exposing to contempt the Dispensers of God's holy Word and Sacraments.

Thus we see what it is to deny Christ, and what is implied in it. But what is it to deny him before Men? Why that is a Circumstance of doing it, that heightens the Guilt of it, and signifies not only an inward secret dislike, but an open and publick disowning of him in the face of the World, by deserting his Cause, when we are called upon to maintain it, and renouncing his Truths when they are called in question. St. Mark styles it, *A being ashamed of Christ and his Word before a sinful and adulterous Generation*, Chap. 8. 38. Shame is a frequent Cause of denying any Person or Thing, we therefore deny it because we are ashamed of it; and 'tis natural to put off, or shrink from that, which we are unwilling to own. *Peter* was first ashamed of Christ, and then he denied him; these commonly go together, or soon follow each other. There are some times when we are more loudly called upon to assert the Cause and Doctrine of Christ, and to vindicate his Truths, when they are opposed and despised by a crooked and perverse Generation. To decline then the defence of them, when the Glory of God, the Honour of our Saviour, and our own Salvation make it necessary, is to deny Christ before Men. A good Soldier and Servant of Jesus Christ will stand by his Master in the greatest Difficulties, and appear for him against all his Enemies; 'tis only the Traytor and Coward that will betray and desert him in time of Danger. Our Saviour is said to witness a good Confession before *Pontius Pilate*; and St. *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* and others to make the like Confession of him before Men, as he himself did before *Festus*, *Felix*, and *Agrippa*: to do otherwise is to desert, and deny him before Men. But,

Secondly, What are the Motives or Inducements, that lead Men thus to deny Christ? Why! Among other things, the two principal are, The fear of Persecution, and the hopes of Preferment; both which clap a wrong byass upon the Mind, that turns it from Christ to *Belial*, and from the Service of God to that of Mammon: for *no Man can serve two Masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other, or cleave to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

First, then, the fear of Persecution hath been one great Cause of driving many from their Duty into a denial of their Saviour. St. *Peter* by the fear of the chief Priests and Elders was more than once or twice drawn into it. And Sufferings have shaken and overthrown the Faith of many, who when Tribulation and Persecution arise by reason of the Word, by and by they are offended. To confess Christ hath been the ready way to be put out of the Synagogue, and not only so, but to be put into Bonds and Imprisonment, and sometimes to Death itself, which Flesh and Blood is apt to start from. 'Tis no hard matter to adhere to Christ in times of Prosperity, when the Weather is fair, and all things go smooth and easy: but when the Clouds begin to gather, and a black Storm of Persecution seems to threaten, then to hold fast the Faith, and keep close to him, is an Heroick Act of Virtue, which without the Grace of God we cannot attain to. And therefore the Apostle represents Martyrdom as an Honour and Privilege confer'd on a few only above the ordinary pitch of Christians, saying, *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. 1. 29. as if it were a peculiar Gift or Excellency granted to some above others, to be singled out for the Champions and Confessors of Jesus Christ.

But may we therefore court Martyrdom for the Honour and Privilege of undergoing it, or run ourselves into danger, when we may safely avoid it? No, The Law of Nature dictates the Duty of Self-preservation; nor does the Law of God forbid any lawful ways or means to escape the Fury and Cruelty of Persecutors. Our Saviour bid his Disciples, if they were persecuted in one City, to flee to another, and not to throw themselves upon the will of their Enemies. And elsewhere he wills them to be wise as Serpents, who are wont to contract themselves into a narrow Compass, and to creep into Holes and Caverns of the Earth to save themselves from harm; and we may as safely retire into Deserts, and the Solitudes of a Wilderness, to prevent greater Evils: For the Apostle speaks of some, of whom the World was not worthy, that *they wandered in Deserts and Mountains, and hid themselves in Dens and Caves of the Earth, to secure their Faith, and obtain a better Resurrection*. Neither is this inconsistent with the innocence of the Dove, to which also our Saviour advises, for that Creature often saves itself by flight from the danger of the Fowler. And we may by the
same

same means at once imitate the wisdom of the Serpent, and preserve the innocence of the Dove ; for he denies not Christ by flying, who therefore flies that he may not deny him : whereas he who flies in the face of Magistrates, and by declaring his Judgment before he is called upon, provokes them to punish him ; and such (as one expresses it) run to Heaven before they are sent for, where tho Christ may for other Reasons in Mercy receive the Man, yet he will be sure to disown the Martyr. However,

Tho some by prudent Methods have secured themselves and their innocence in times of Persecution, yet others by wrong Measures have been induced to deny Christ and his Religion to avoid it. And as some have denied Christ for fear of Persecution, so others have been induced to it by an inordinate love of the Profits and Preferments of this World. These things draw strong either to or from Christ. If to receive him and his Doctrine be the way to Preferment, he will have many Profelytes ; but if it prove otherwise, and lead the contrary way to Adversity and Trouble, they soon turn their backs, and bid him adieu. The Miracle of the Loaves brought to our Saviour many Disciples, who followed him while they lasted, and had hopes of fresh supplies of more ; but when that failed, they forsook, and walked no more with him. *Demas* forsook *St. Paul* for love of this present World, and *Diotrefhes* left the Apostles, because he lov'd Preheminence. Which things are great Occasions of Men's denying and deserting our blessed Lord. But,

Thirdly, How, or in what manner is this done ? Why ! Sometimes *in Verbis*, by Words and oral Expressions ; and sometimes *in Scriptis*, by blasphemous Writings ; and sometimes *in Operibus*, by wicked Works : by all which his Name is blasphem'd, and his Truths either traduced or trampled on.

1. There is a denying of Christ in Words, and oral Expressions, which proceeds from an evil Heart of Unbelief. The Heart is the first Mover of the Tongue, or the Spring from which all our Speeches flow ; for *out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. The Fool first says in his Heart, and after that with the Tongue, that there is no God ; and from thence becomes so corrupt and abominable, as not to understand or seek after God. This is a degree of Wicked-

Wickedness, that Men do not presently come to ; there is a Reluctance in the Mind to it at first, which must be conquer'd by time and continuance in Sin ; the Heart must be hardened, the Conscience seared, and the Forehead steeld, before they can arrive to it.

And yet such Monsters of Impiety are to be found in our Days, who set their Mouths against Heaven, and are not ashamed to disown their Maker and Redeemer, looking upon the Gospel of Christ as a cunningly devised Fable ; and the preaching of it to be no other than Priestcraft, saying with that profane Pope, *Quantum nobis profuit hæc Fabula de Christo?* How great Profit have we reaped from this Fable of Christ? Such as these take the Boldness openly in words to deny both the Father and the Son. But there are more modest, tho no less impious Offenders of this kind, who own Christ in their Words, but in their Deeds deny him, living without God and without Christ in the World ; which is the

2d Way of denying him, viz. by wicked Works and Writings. To make an open Profession of Christ and his Religion, without a suitable Conversation, is to deny him with greater Solemnity, but with equal Impiety : 'Tis with the *Jews* to cry, *Hail Master!* and crucify him ; and with *Judas*, at the same time to kiss and betray him. Actions speak louder than Words, and 'tis in vain to be Professors of Piety, if at the same time we are Workers of Iniquity. Faith without good Works is dead, and can never bring us to everlasting Life ; and is no better than the Faith of Devils, who are said to believe and tremble. To do the Will of our heavenly Father is a better way of confessing Christ, than the crying *Lord, Lord* ; and we more effectually honour him by the Holiness of our Lives, than by the empty Praises of our Lips.

And as Christ is denied by wicked Works, so is he by pernicious Writings and Pamphlets, which infuse those false Notions, that corrupt and poison the Minds of many, and like a Gangrene, eat out the very Vitals of Religion. And with these our degenerate Age most unhappily abounds ; wherein the Pen hath done more mischief than the Sword, some drawing it against the Divinity, others against the Incarnation, and others against the Resurrection of our blessed Saviour, together with all the Mysteries of the Gospel ; which is to pluck up the Christian Religion by the

Root,

Root, and to destroy it in all its Branches. And therefore if we will not be found in the number of those who deny Christ, we must appear in defense and maintenance of these Truths against all Opposers; not to betray them by our Silence, or tamely yield them up to the Arrogance and Petulance of Christ's and our Enemies, but to *contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, and that not with carnal Weapons, but spiritual Armour, *having on the Girdle of Truth, the Breast-Plate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit*; which spiritual Armour will be mighty thro' God, to the pulling down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan, and to the building of us up in our most holy Faith. To neglect these things, is not only to deny Christ, but to make him a Liar. Which will lead from the Sin, to consider the just Punishment threatned to it,

The *Last thing* to be spoken to, and that is, Christ's denying all such before his Father which is in Heaven. This, being opposed to Christ's owning his Confessors as true and faithful Servants, before his and our heavenly Father, the Happiness whereof is inconceivable, must be his disowning the Deniers of him, as false and deceitful Followers of him, before his Father in Heaven, the Misery whereof is inexpressible; for he will then and there beseech his Father in these and the like Words: Father, these are they who bore indeed my Name in the World, and sometimes called upon it, and were called by it; but they shamefully dishonour'd and blasphemed it, yea, and caused others to blaspheme: They had a Form of Godliness, but denied the Power thereof, which had no Influence either upon their Hearts or Lives: They pretended to be my Servants and Disciples, but were so far from following, that they wilfully left and forsook me, preferring the Service of Mammon and the World before me; and instead of denying themselves for my sake, they denied me for their own sakes. Father, I will that these be banished for ever from thy Presence, and receive the just Recompence of their Ingratitude and Infidelity, that as they denied me before Men, so they may now be denied before the holy Angels.

Whereupon Christ, to whom all Judgment is committed, will mount the Throne of his Glory, and pronounce against them

them the doleful Sentence of Condemnation, saying, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Where every Word will strike Dread and Horror into their guilty Minds. The first Word, *Depart*, must sound harsh and grating in the Ears of all that know what it is; for it is the driving them from the Father of Mercies, and God of all Consolation; 'tis departing from the Fountain of all Felicity, and the Giver of all that is good and desirable; which cannot be but a dismal and heart-breaking Parting, especially being dismissed with a Curse instead of a Blessing, saying, *Go, ye cursed*: And they who are thus cursed, must be cursed indeed. But whither are they doomed to go? Why, into the Depth of Misery and Perdition, described here by *everlasting Fire*. Of all the Elements none is more terrible and tormenting than Fire, which is therefore commonly used to set forth the extreme Pains and Torments of the Damned; to which the Addition of *everlasting* renders it the most dreadful and insufferable of all Punishments. 'Tis some Ease to a Person in Misery to have a Prospect of, and an End and Deliverance from it; but to be sentenced to endless, easeless, and remediless Tortures, that know no Period or Diminution, is the Height of Misery, and the Emphasis of Damnation. And yet this will be the Lot and Portion of those Hypocrites and Unbelievers, who confess Christ in their Words, but in their Works deny him; their Minds will be for ever gnaw'd upon by a Worm that never dies, and their Bodies prey'd upon by a Fire that never goes out. This is the Sentence said to be prepar'd for *the Devil and his Angels*, those Apostate Spirits that exalted themselves above their Maker, and were therefore cast down below the lowest Rank of Creatures, and reserved in Chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the last Day. And this will be the certain Fate of all those who suffer themselves to be seduced by them into the like Ambition, who are therefore said to fall into the Snare and Condemnation of the Devil.

And now, my Brethren, we have here set before us Life and Death, Heaven and Hell, the one a Place of everlasting Joy and Happiness, the other of endless Woe and Torment; chuse then this Day which of these ye would have.

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Go to, and let your Wisdom direct you to such a Choice, as of which you may never have Cause to repent, when 'tis too late to be redressed. By confessing and adhering to Christ you walk in the Path of Life that leads into the Presence of God, and the Enjoyment of it for ever; by denying and deserting of Christ, you are in the Way to Destruction, or the Habitations of Misery and Torment prepared for the Devil and his Angels. And who that is wise and consults his own Safety can be at a loss which of these to chuse? Let us then resolve from this Day forward to join with that blessed Company that walk with, and stick to Christ; and have no Fellowship with that accursed Crew, that desert the Truth, and deny the Lord: So shall we escape the black Regions of Misery and Darknes, and live for ever with Christ in the Mansions of Light and Immortality: Which God grant, for the Merits and Mediation of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore.
Amen.





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